Rubber

VINTAGE SPECIAL

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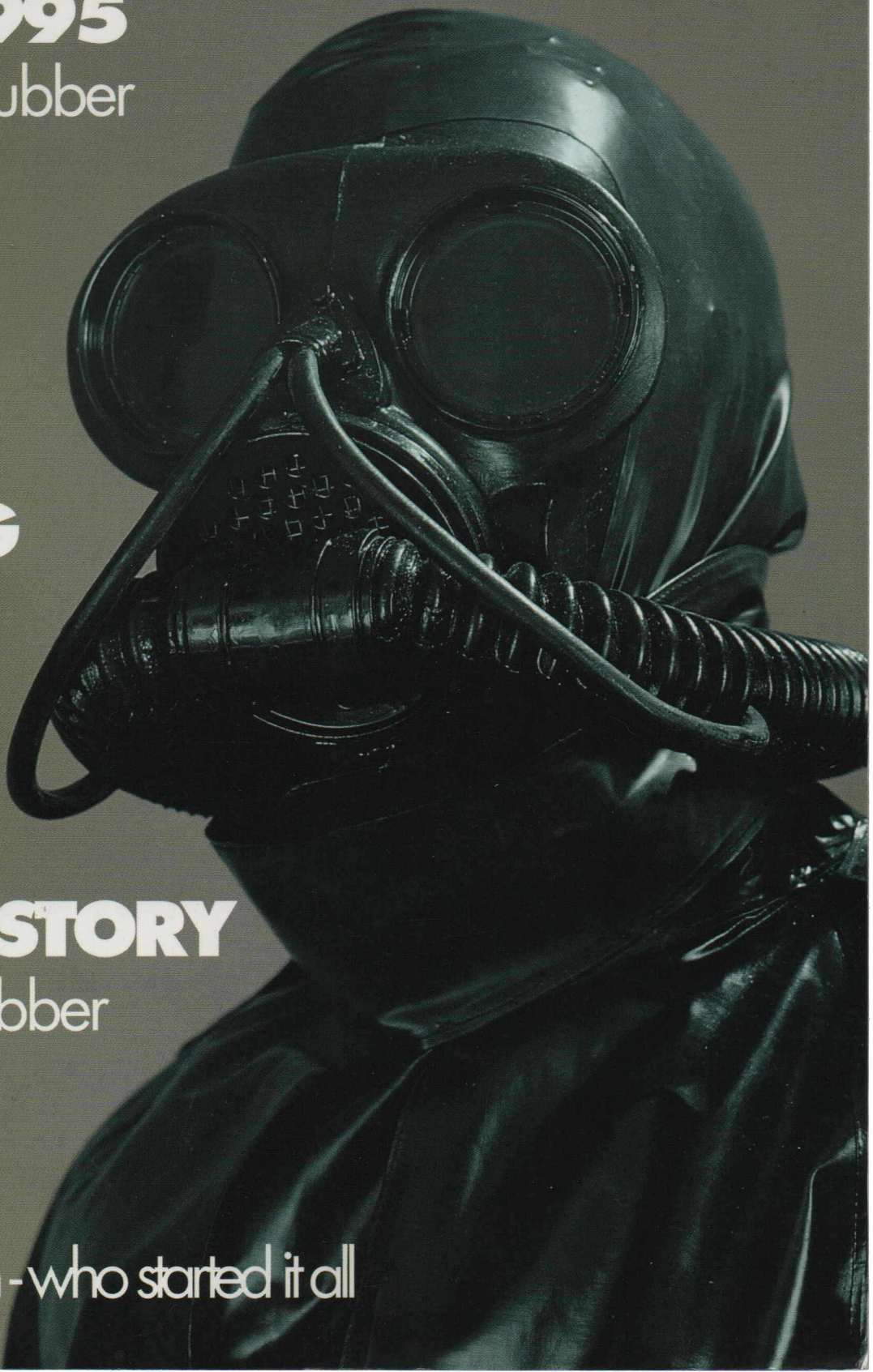
1975 - 1995
20 Years of Rubber Fetishism

BIZARRE
Costumes

AMAZING
Readers' Pictures & Stories

SARAH'S STORY
I Married a Rubber Lover

ALSO:
The Rubber Man - who started it all



SHINY VINTAGE RUBBER SPECIAL

A RUBBERIST MAGAZINE

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Editor: Dave Roberts
Assistant Editor: Gloria Kelt
Consultant Editor: Robert Henley

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THIS is a celebration of twenty years of the Rubberist - seven of them under the Shiny banner. It takes a look back at the twenty-four issues of Rubberist as a Shiny magazine, a publishing achievement that must surely be unique. Proof that Rubberist remains an accurate reflection of 'the amazing world of rubber'.

During its life more than half of the pictures have been contributed by readers, and so it is only fair to include in our vintage selection a few that appealed to you the first time they were shown. This vintage collection reflects the widespread use of black and white in the early issues (and there are many readers who believe rubber shows its best in tones of black and grey). Once again readers have been most helpful in digging through their private collections to loan us some of their previously unpublished photographs.

Things have changed a great deal in twenty years -and that is reflected in these pictures. Angela (opposite) has been a dedicated rubberist since the seventies; Angie - dressed by Sealwear of Bournemouth - is your modern rubberist girl who can't see what all the fuss is about and just likes wearing rubber for sexy fun! She is puzzled by all the secrecy that used to shroud rubber 'fetishism', and finds 'the old fashioned pictures' fascinating.

It seems to us though, looking through this collection, that the tastes of the rubberists have not changed all that much; it is the attitude of the public at large that has become more understanding. People are now intrigued rather than shocked by pictures like these. Even so, the true story of a marriage to a 'rubberist' in this issue shows that we still have a long way to go in changing sexual attitudes.

A big Thank You to all those readers who helped bring this collection to life - and there will be more in the DRESSING FOR PLEASURE SPECIAL out soon.

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The annual Eccentric Fashion Shows were all very much audience-participation events, even arranging for the guests to test out their rubber-wear under the sprinklers!

It was in 1971 that Eccentric Fashions in Switzerland mounted the first of their now internationally famed fashion shows. Leather and the shiny vinyls were in the forefront, but - for the first time - clothes in latex and rubber made a big contribution.

In England there were firms like Kastleys and South Bucks Rainwear selling SBR macintoshes and latex playsuits and pants, but it was done with discreet adverts. Weathervain in Richmond, and

The Changing Scene

Sealwear in Bournemouth were brave enough to move into retailing and black and white mail order catalogues, but that was only the beginning ...

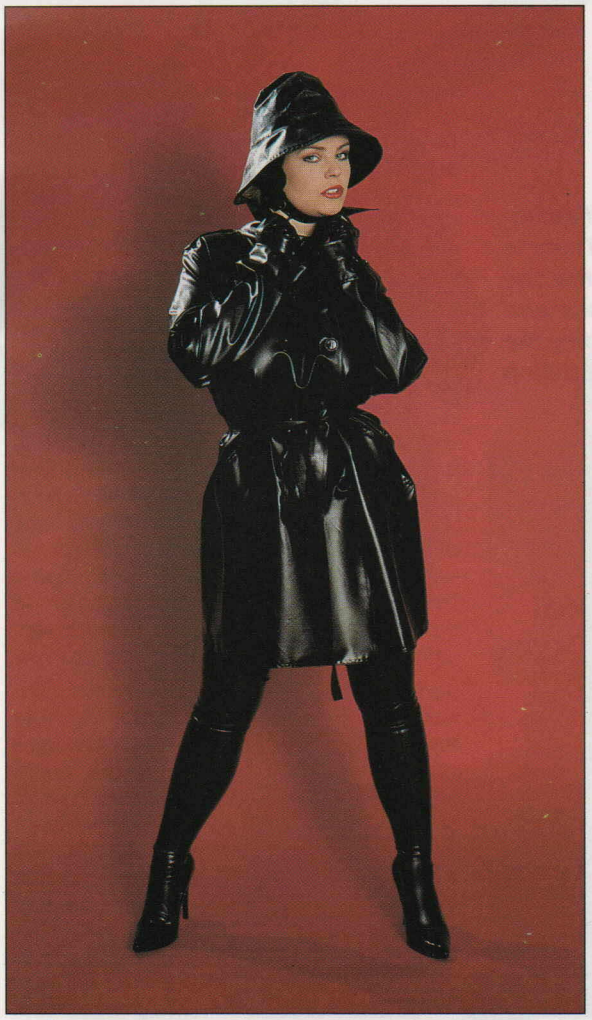
Social events, where the rubber clothes could be paraded in public, were very few. The Rubber Ball in the Porchester Hall was more memorable for not showing rubber clothes, apart from the odd mac and wellies. But then things began to move - again starting over on the continent.

Club Domo in Amsterdam, top and right, makes no secret of its intentions - this is a venue where the rubber fetishist can act out his wildest fantasies!

The Americans were surprisingly slow to catch on to Fetish Freedom. But Constance Enterprises in New York saw the trend, and their 80s fashion shows were to start a demand for rubberwear that now has even* Vogue *running features.

Even in the 60s there was fashion underground, and behind locked door there were private shows for fashions like this, left, a picture from an Austrian reader.

That the interest is worldwide, there is little doubt - the maid with her slave is from Austrialia. Kayser, who specialise in rubberwear, were founded more than a decade ago.



Compare what Weathervain (above) and Sealwear (right) were selling in the 70s with the kind of thing they sell today - not a great deal of difference. The mac on the left and the nun's habit on the next page still show the same classic appeal for the rubberist, but there are plenty of new fashions to appeal to the modern, fashion-conscious rubberist.

The ever-widening circle of specialist firms include such now well-established names as Mac Mac (above), Cocoon (below), and Zeitgeist. (There is a feature on Mac Mac in the new Rubberist 21). From catsuits, like the one here made by Cocoon, to the rubber fetish fashions for 'nuns', 'nurses' and 'infants', like this 'playsuit' from Zeitgeist, there is no difficulty in finding the rubber garment to suit your particular rubber interest. See our advertising for addresses and details of catalogues.

The Rubber Man

Even the post office had no difficulty delivering a letter addressed to that name.

There are hardly any pictures of the man who started the *Rubberist*. Although he loved the camera, he always insisted on being behind the lens and not in front. He was modest and self-effacing, but - as creator and designer, artist, craftsman and photographer - his influence was extraordinary. A new generation of young designers 'discovering' the possibilities of rubber and leather and PVC owe him a great debt.

John Sutcliffe founded *Atomage* in 1957, and he registered the company as 'a manufacturer of weatherproofs for lady pillion riders'. His first designs for 'lady pillion riders' were in leather and the new shiny vinyls, but in order to produce them he had first to teach himself dressmaking. Although rubber also fascinated him, he had accepted the well-meaning advice of friends that it was too difficult to make up the garments.

But John was very resourceful. He had graduated from the College of Aeronautical Engineering in Chelsea, had become Chief Inspector of Engines with the pre-war British Airways, designed a wireless receiver the size of a cigarette packet and invented a technique for the invisible repair of antique porcelain. So thinking up a new method of bonding rubber was relatively easy, and in 1967 he formulated a new glue, adapted a cheap travel iron to seal the seams, and produced his first rubber garment.

Leather and shiny vinyl were to remain John's first choice of materials for his designs but, under pressure from his Atomage customers, he began to produce more and more rubberwear. He became so well known even the post office had no difficulty in delivering a letter addressed simply *'The* Rubberman, Covent Garden, London, England'.

Possibly his most extraordinary creation in rubber was for a lady. A chance encounter on a wet day in a car park - she was wearing a smart rubber mac - led to the discovery that she was secretly fascinated by rubber. She told John she had this fantasy where she was seeking a lost jewel in a lake. She dreamt that she hunted for it dressed in a frogman's suit. She told John that she was so ashamed of her dream that she had not even dared to tell her boyfriend.

She went with John to his workshop and the result was a rubber suit for her and the chance to bring to life her childhood fantasy! Very early one Sunday morning in 1975, after she had dressed in the suit in John's garage, he drove her down to Boldermere Lake, close beside the A3 in Surrey.

Although John had never previously made a movie, he managed to use a borrowed 8mm camera to capture the event as she went into the lake to rescue a brass curtain ring that John had dropped in the mud at the start.

The amateur film, called by John *Under Three Layers*, can still be seen. Blurred copies of copies of copies made by his friends and taken from the one original (now lost) still circulate among readers. Had John been alive today and

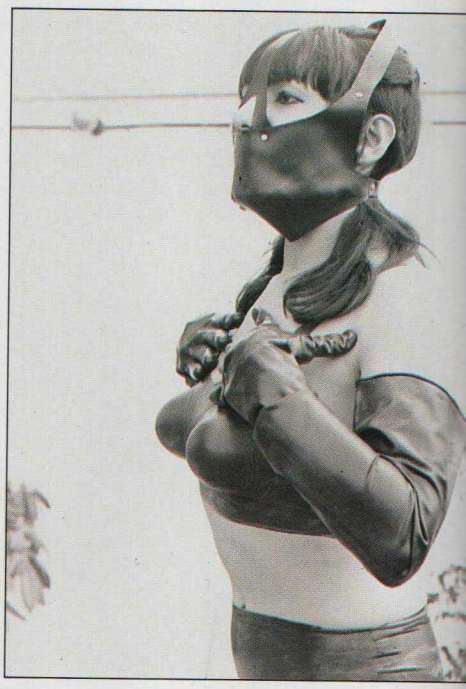
had the use of a modern camcorder, the film would have been a classic. The lady was keen to make more amateur films but unfortunately for us her boyfriend was not a rubberist and, after their marriage, insisted she dispose of all her rubberwear including the famous suit!

Those readers who insist that 'rubberism' is limited to the male sex may need to revise their views after reading this. John claimed this lady was not unique and that ten per cent of his customers were women, even excluding dominant mistresses and those who wore leather, vinyl and rubber for what John politely called "professional reasons".

The picture at the start of this article shows John with one of his favoured customers - Ms Antoinette from California. Another was a well-known film star who had John create the most extraordinary outfits in leather, vinyl and rubber which she wore to Hollywood parties! She even had John fly over to sew her into a one-piece leather catsuit complete with high heeled boots for one party (John called it his 'bootsuit')! Yet another lady customer habitually wore latex undergarments and petticoats, and when an elaborate rubber ball gown he designed for her met with an accident, he drove all the way to Switzerland overnight to make repairs so she could appear in four layers of rubber at the Eccentric Fashion Show Ball!

Another project was *The Master and Mistresses Handbook* which John produced in collaboration with two old friends. Most of the outfits they made to illustrate the book (published privately on the continent) were of rubber, and some of John's pictures are shown here.

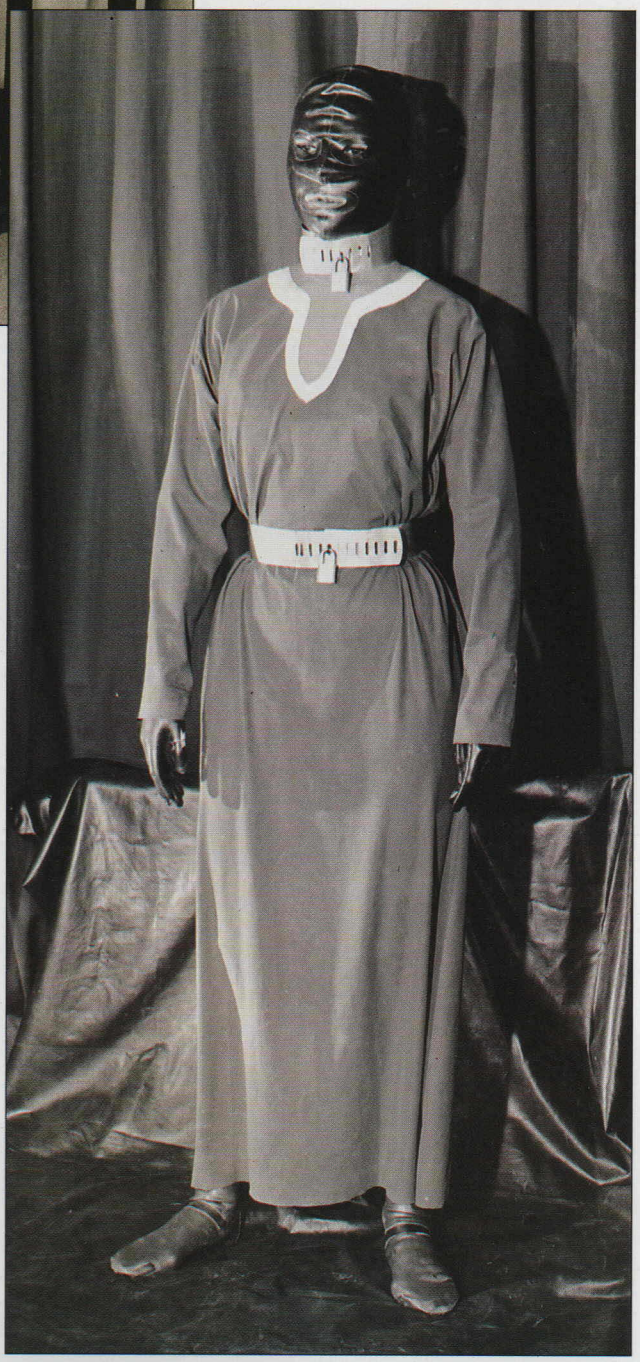
On the previous page - John's first rubber dress and skirt in rubber adapted from a leather pattern. Here: a froglady's suit! Opposite: early experiments to create a comfortable catsuit. John even persuaded a firm to make soft-leg rubber waders for ladies!



It is difficult to evaluate John's contribution to 'The Scene'. It was John who founded *Dressing for Pleasure*, shortly to be followed by *Rubberist* in 1975. Today rubber fashions are to be seen at the clubs and at the parties which surely owes something to the influence of books, and magazines like his and ours, and films and advertisements where John's fashions were seen by a new and more liberated generation who have been quick to adopt them.

We hope to publish a further tribute to John Sutcliffe of Atomage in the *Dressing for Pleasure Special* out later this year, and show you more of his photographs.

"An orgasm is an orgasm, whether in a balloon in the stratosphere or in a submarine on the ocean floor, or dressed in rubber, leather or vinyl. It is only in the foreplay that our different mental make-ups need varying pathways ... and some of these paths are sights and sounds and smells .... the sexual parts are boringly normal ... we just need the holes ... the exits and the entrances in the right places." *John Sutcliffe.*



John never had any difficulty in finding models. Opposite, top, was a friend who loved to be a 'guinea-pig' for John's ideas and to pose for pictures. John created almost all the elaborate costumes for the Master and Mistresses Handbook - published in France to avoid censorship - and which is now a collector's volume selling at very high prices.

GETTING Wet

Testing out your rubberwear has aways been a popular theme in the Rubberist over the years. There was even a reader who tried to form 'The Hippo Club' for those who liked wading in mud. He held one meeting in the West Country but they must have all drowned as we have heard nothing since from any of the paticipants!

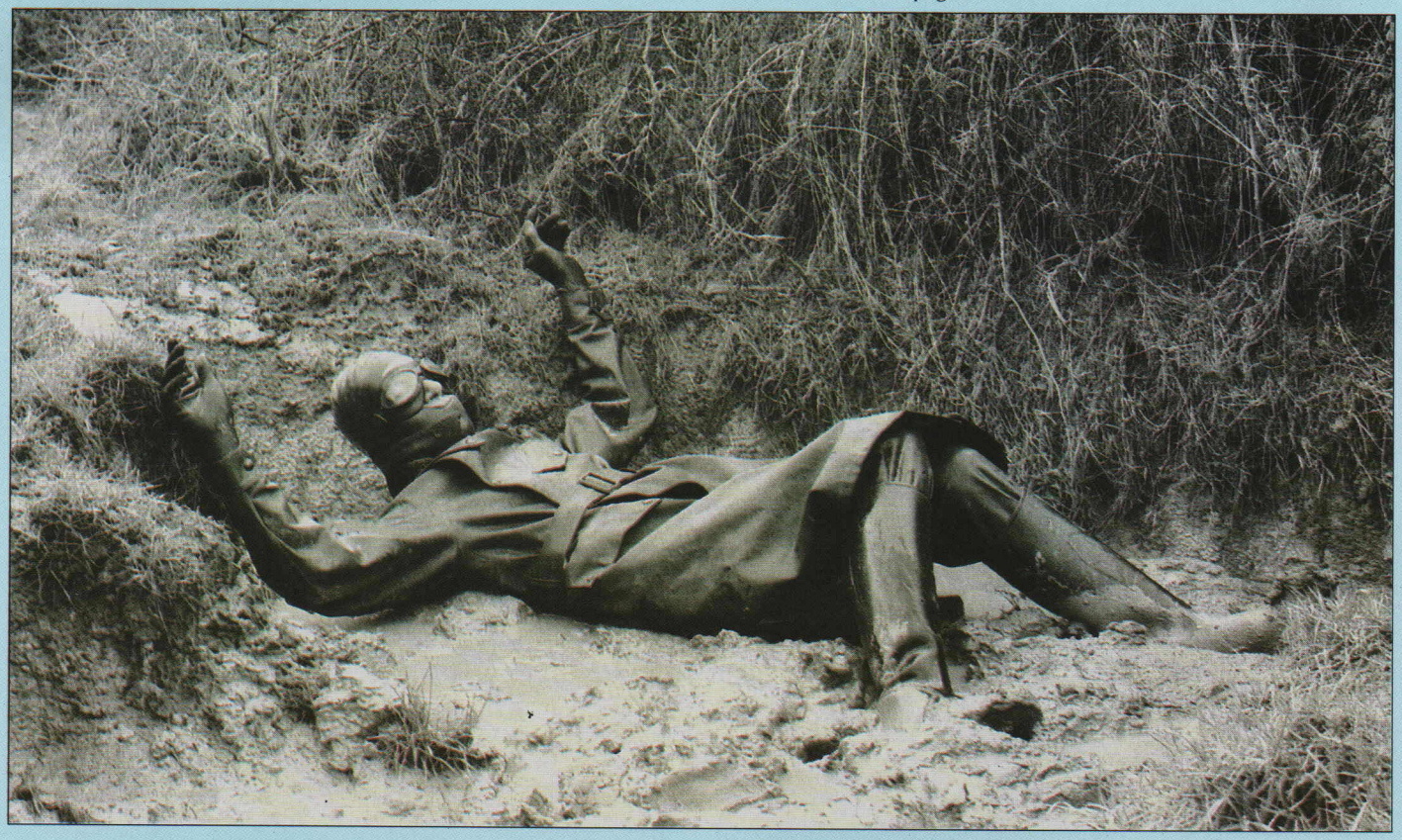
Common complaints of the wet rubberists are 1) the difficulties of using a camera in the wet and keeping it dry; 2) finding someone to hold the

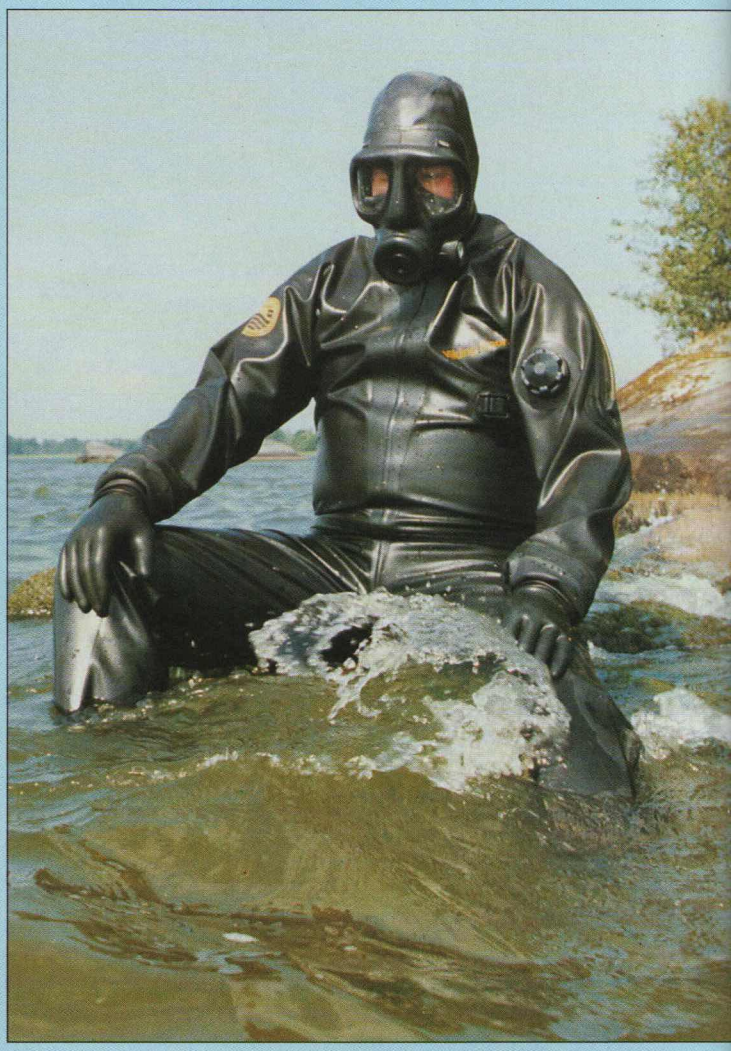
camera while the rubberist sloshes about; 3) finding somewhere private to don all the rubberwear; and 4) somewhere to take it all off again afterwards!

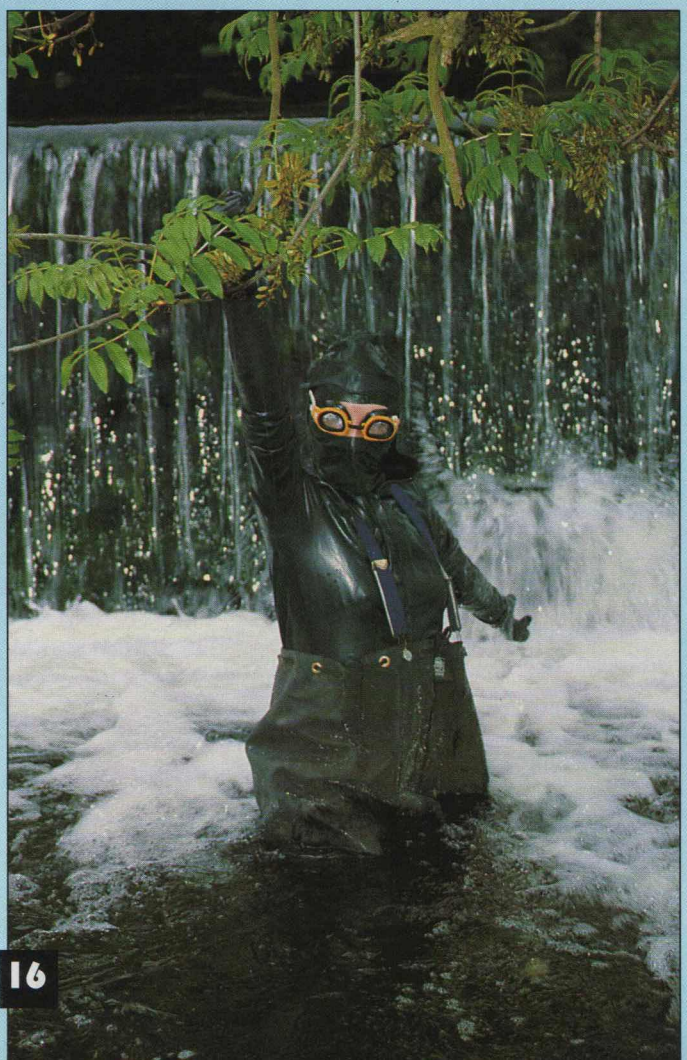
It does not seem to be a problem with the *Rubber Club of Japan* who are pictured on page 17. They are really into the wet, and send us great pictures. The couple, left, used a flash mounted on a camera on a tripod placed in a doorway during a thunderstorm. The reader on the right cheated, he used a hose to test his rubberwear.

The rain-walkers are a different group to the mud-larkers, but there is common agreement that to really enjoy the pastime you need to be totally enclosed in rubber, and that usually means wearing several layers. Hoods and masks are optional.

continued page 18





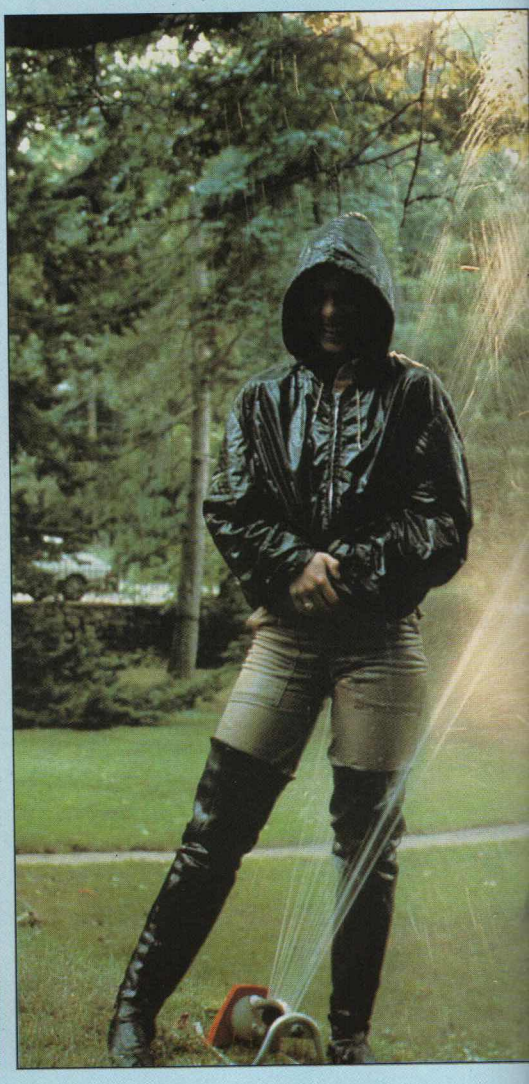


Mud wader from Sussex, a wader from Sweden, and two pictures of Lisa who lists wading in layers of rubber as ' my favourite sport - next to sex'! Above, reader W. from Herts, a couple of 'Hippos' from the U.S.A., and three pictures from Japan of a 'wading picnic'. (To judge by the expression Ms Wong seems to have got a tadpole trapped inside her chest-highs!)

The yachtsman reader tests his rubberwear solo by attaching a line to his waist and dropping over the side of the boat! Seems a bit risky if the line snapped!

Describing the pleasures of rubbering in the wet, many seem to find difficult.

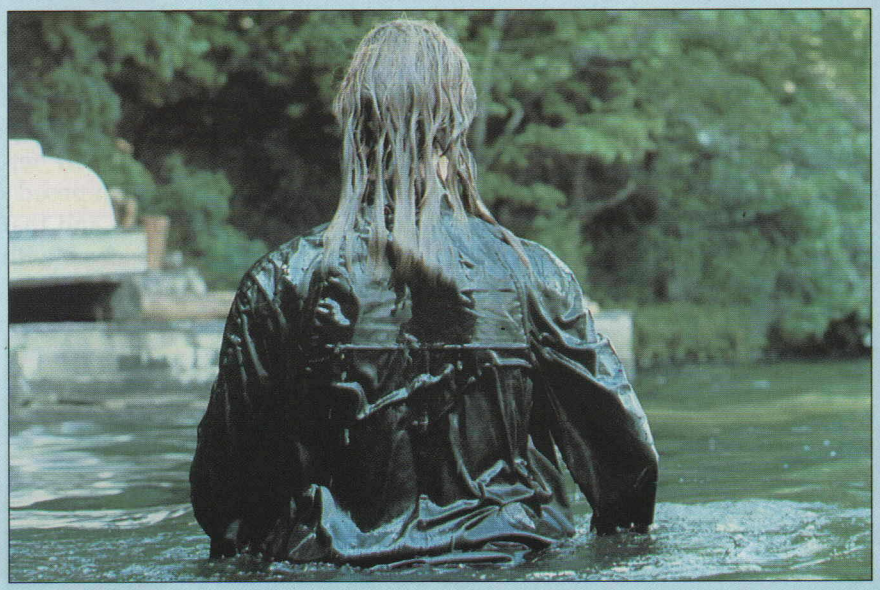
Four of the pictures come from an Austrian reader who says she is fascinated by water and adores 'the cold feeling through the rubber or whatever I am wearing'. The yachtsman is from Germany, and the reader from Surrey tells us he needed five layers of rubber to keep out the winter cold when he went wading on Christmas morning!



One lady says she comes close to orgasm when she feels the water squeezing and pressing in against the waders.

A male reader says he gets an erection the moment the water reaches to penis height.

Whatever the form of pleasure - there is no doubt the devotees all thoroughly enjoy themselves.



The lady in green rubber is Barbara, whose wet-wading activities have been reported in several issues. She is keen to make contact with other wading fans who want to take pictures - we will forward letters.

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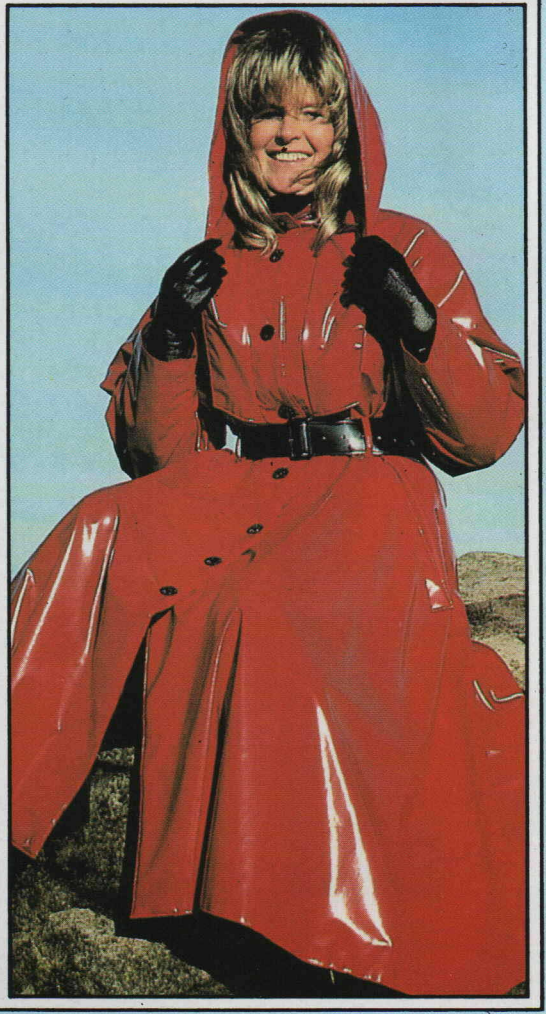

There is very little doubt that the most popular sections of the magazines are readers' own stories and pictures. Other magazines that claim to cater for this market never seem willing to explore this area, feeling perhaps they should not peep behind the curtains or invite rubberists to talk frankly of their interests.

Or maybe it is because we can genuinely reflect the Rubber Scene with truth and sympathy and understanding? Whatever it is, we are very privileged to be loaned pictures from readers' albums, and have their consent to publish them.

It achieves a lot in helping readers to make social contact. We know from letters that there are many who, until they saw the readers' pictures, believed they were alone with their 'fetish'. Seeing the pictures - none of them posed - proves that there is nothing harmful and that everyone is entitled to enjoy themselves with what is, after all, a harmless pleasure.

Readers' Own Pix

Opposite: Batman and his wife are from Gloucestershire; Mr and Mrs P are from the Midlands. Above is Sarah from Australia, and that is mother and daughter (mum Fiona on the right) who were featured in Rubberist 7. Both are keen rubberists and readers. The white rubber outfit was designed by reader Ken. Claudia who lives in Italy and is a recent 'convert to rubber after reading your magazine given to me by my slave'!

Readers' Own Pix

This lady likes rubber macs and boots and making love on rubber sheets. She is not too keen on masks and gasmasks but wears them partly to please her husband and for photos so neighbours and friends won't recognize her as she says she is rather shy about being a rubberist - she considers it to be something private and special between husband and wife.

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Weather or Not

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Mrs D from Germany likes to relax dressed all in rubber - quite often with a dildo under the suit!

These other couples make no secret of what they like to do when dressed head-to-toe in rubber (including layers out of sight of the camera) either in the bedroom or out of doors in the rain!

MASK-QUERADE

Our artist's lady looks rather nervous about her mask, but for many of our readers, collecting and wearing masks and respirators of all kinds is a 'hobby' that affords them a lot of pleasure and excitement. Here are three pages of pictures - a salute to those collectors.

Above, Rose in Germany - she and her husband (also seen on the next page) have a collection of over two hundred respirators. Hap Water is especially interested in women skindivers, as well as taking pictures of them wearing masks.

Both sexes share a fascination for respirators: Angela, Rose and her husband from Germany, Marion from the Midlands in several layers of rubber, Rita and her husband from the USA, are all keen readers of the Rubberist.

FITTING A MASK

The fitting of a mask is most important if it is to be comfortable for long periods.

All hair should be combed flat. A rubber headdress should then be fitted (the full head type is best). Spread it wide between your fingers and draw it down over the front of your head, almost to your eyebrows. Stretch and pull it right down to nape of neck. Apply talc to headdress then take it over your head, leaving it in a bundle at the back of your neck.

Take your selected mask and loosen all straps. Clean lenses inside and out with soft cloth. Place a small wad of cotton wool inside the chin section, or as I do, two tampax removed from tubes. These are very absorbent and will take care of any undue sweat over a three to four hour period.

Pre-heat interior of mask by holding it in front of a turbo heater. This has two advantages: it stops misting as soon as you put it on, and it makes rubber expand slightly. this helps it grip better as you have it on and it cools to body temperature.

Now, spread straps wide, insert your chin into mask and gently pull whole mask back over your head. Make sure it is sitting correctly then adjust each strap in turn for a tight and comfortable fit.

Now apply some talc to straps that should be sitting snugly into underclad then pull your overhood up over the lot so it fits smoothly and overlaps your mask flanges by about one inch. Pull neck of hood down smoothly. You will now find your mask is a living part of you.

If you are a rubber TV and want to wear make-up under your mask, don't use any foundation. Don't wear extra long false eyelashes as these will touch glass. Do use waterproof eye cosmetics.

I would not advise you to add restriction to your breathing.

If you wear a cape or mackintosh with an attached rubber hood, it is best to leave it down as it slithers off your overhood, or fit a press fastener to your cape or mack hood as this holds tightly and neatly over your mask. *Gwen.*

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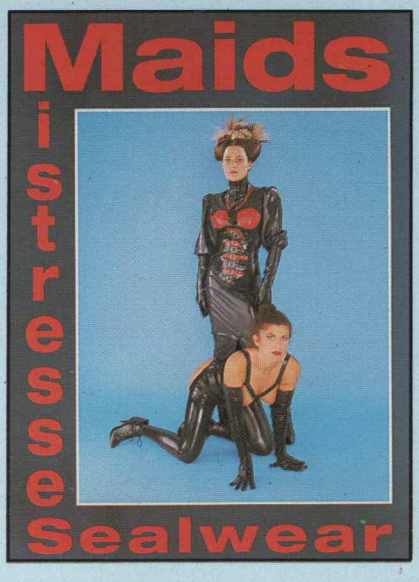

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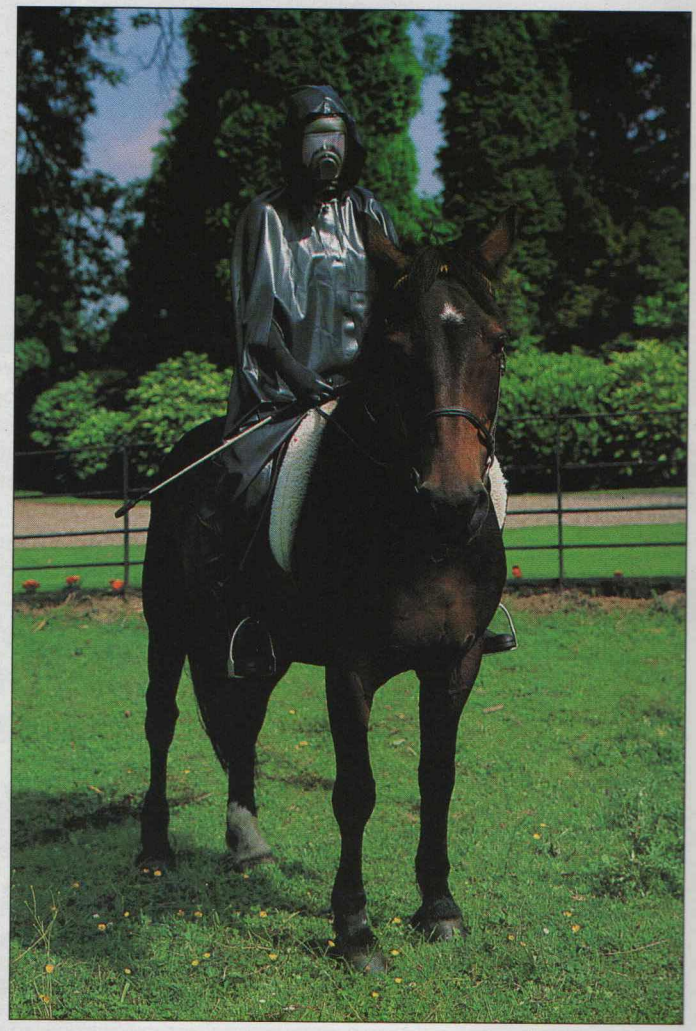
This couple from Eire appeared in one of the first issues of Rubberist. They enjoy walking along the deserted cliffs in their remote part of Ireland dressed in rubber and masks. Below is Hille - a reader who invited us to photograph her on horseback in one of her chosen outfits. She appeared in Dressing for Pleasure 17 and Shiny 58, and her 'excuse' is that she 'just loves loves dressing up and riding in fantastic costumes'.



Above: A dedicated lady rubberist from Switzerland who invited readers to write, and had over fifty letters - one of which has led, so we understand, to marriage! A Dutch reader who shares his interest with his wife and who invites letters from other couples. Right, a reader from Scotland who also likes to correspond with other rubberists. Below, three pictures from some of our earliest readers showing their favoured outfits.

Sarah's Story

What is it really like to be married to a rubberist? An intriguing question, especially forty years ago when few knew of rubber fetishism, and even the freedom brought by sexual knowledge and awareness was still to come.

Here is a true story of 'rubberism' in the fifties, sexual innocence and religious bigotry, an arranged marriage, all ingredients that combine to make it the most unlikely love story you are ever likely to read.

Back in 1964, the late John Sutcliffe was sent a manuscript in four exercise books, filled with small, neat handwriting and little pencil sketches. Part of the true-life story was published in *Atomage*, and such was the interest that he decided to edit and publish the full text.

Sadly, John died suddenly before the book could be distributed, and less than one hundred copies came onto the market, apart from the fifty that the delighted authoress ordered for herself. She has several times since urged us to reprint the book with various amendments and additions.

Here is an edited version of the opening chapters, and we would like to hear what you think. These illustrations are not all by Sarah herself - as most of the original drawings have been lost - but are based on them by artist Richard Spiteri.

On the eve of my wedding my mother took me into the front parlour and closed the door. Tomorrow, she declared, I would be mistress "of a gran' hoose up the brae". How blessed it was that I had been named Sarah after the wife of the elderly Abraham. I should read Genesis again and model myself on her.

Did I understand I must be prepared for David to lie with me in the manner of Sarah with Abraham; in the manner of my sister with her husband? This was the way it was with all women who wished for the marriage to be blessed.

Tomorrow night my husband would come to me and he would make an entry into me. She refused to explain exactly where and with what - that was the man's business". All she would say was that he "readies himself with rapid pushing movements while I offer up silent prayer to receive his seed with God's grace. I would know it "as a hot squeezing". She warned me it was not seemly to say anything or cry out while he was doing it.

How often, I asked her, would David do this?

That would be up to David, but, she thought, three or even four times a week at first for it was, as God had ordained in Genesis, to be in the nature of the man when he first cleaved unto the woman to be very vigorous with his seed. The woman laid with the man until she was with child; then it would cease.

I thought of my elder sister at nineteen, married the previous summer to a young member of our Chapel, pale and sick, puffing, panting and complaining, with her hands always supporting her swollen stomach. If this was God's intention why was being with child so uncomfortable?

Mother explained that it had been Eve's punishment that she - and all women after - should bear children in pain and suffering. God would restore my ripeness soon after the birth, then I must expect to cleave with David again. Now it need be only twice or three times a month. More would not be seemly, and a wife could now refuse him without sin; indeed it was her task to keep a husband from "spilling his seed into her too often for that invited the sin of fornication". The act, she reminded me, was for one purpose only.

That was the total sum of my sex education, and I begin my story with this account to help explain just why I was so naive. I suppose, looking back, I was so totally innocent about everything except the books of The Bible. But at least I had no preconceptions about variations from the sexual norm such as dressing up in rubber. I did not know what the sexual norm was.

I had grown up with a brother and two sisters - one sister younger than me - on the north east coast of Scotland near to Frazerburgh where the founders of our Christian fundamentalist sect - The Brethren - had settled from Ireland more than one hundred years ago, there to await an Armageddon confidently expected .

Our lives followed strictly a literal interpretation of the Bible: a strict Christian sect that believes the Bible compares the position of a child to that of a slave (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; Galatians

4:1). Children come under the commandment of their parents, and 'honour thy father and thy mother' meant exactly that. Education finished at sixteen for girls.

Alcohol and smoking were forbidden, and TV, radio, music, the cinema, dancing and non-religious works of literature were forbidden as being unnecessary distractions from the Christian life. Even the telephone was regarded with suspicion. The secular world, I was told, represents evil.

The Brethren met once a week for prayers and preaching; twice a week there were Bible classes, and Sunday was strictly observed as a day of rest where no activity other than Bible reading and prayer were allowed.

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In 1956, on a bitterly cold February evening, a few months after my eighteenth birthday, I was introduced to my husband. Until that day I knew him only as the dentist in the white coat who looked into my mouth and who had complimented me on my teeth; a wealthy widower who lived alone in a large house outside the town. All Father said, by way of an introduction, was: "Mr Murray doesn't look forty does he?"

In 1956, on a bitterly cold February evening, a few months after my eighteenth birthday, I was introduced to my husband.

Father told me David had never known his father. Although a conscientious objector, on religious grounds, his father had been forced to go to France as a hospital orderly and had been killed towards the end of the First World War. His mother had died when he was only ten, and he had been brought up by an aunt who had been a member of the Brethren - although she was not strict in all the observances.

After qualifying in Edinburgh, David had returned to our town with a young wife. She was not of our beliefs and she had enticed him away from our congregation and religion. God had punished them. Although he had wanted a son, she had died childless seven years earlier. Now he was seeking God's grace and an end to his loneliness.

We were invited to tea at David's house which stood on the bend of a wide road overlooking the town and sea. It was very large - ten times the size of ours -full of cold, draughty rooms and an air of sad neglect. The large, sloping garden was overgrown and untidy. It seemed such a great waste.

David and I sat in the front room on our own and he came straight to the point. Did I think a twenty-two year difference in our ages made it impossible for me to accept him as a husband? He said he felt sure he could make me happy. He said I should give him my answer in a week. The word love was not used.

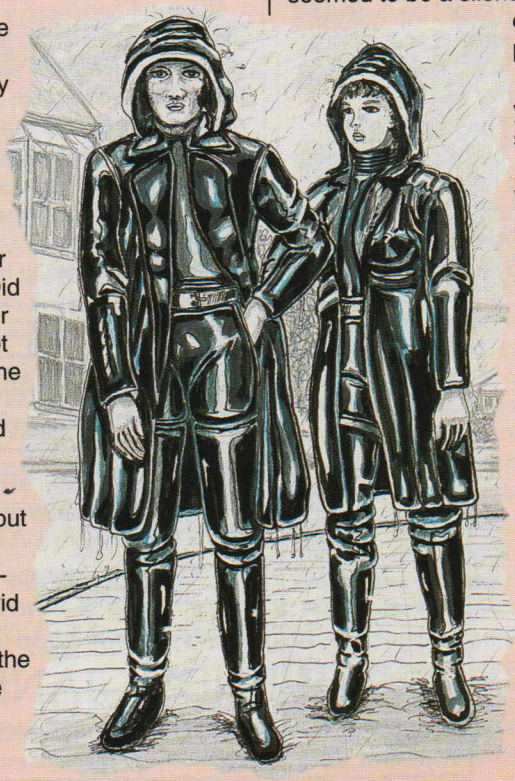
I took Morag to the house up the brae. She was my only friend, the same age, but disapproved of by my parents because she was Church of Scotland. The housekeeper let us in reluctantly although David had said I could come whenever I liked. Morag and I talked in stage whispers in the huge hall that was bigger than our entire house. Upstairs there were seven bedrooms, and I showed Morag the room I was going to decorate for myself. It was a dark, dusty room still fitted - despite the war ending ten years earlier - with huge blackout curtains and strips of brown paper criss-crossed over the windows as a protection against splintering from bomb blasts! I told Morag it had been agreed I could have my own room. I had always wanted a private place of my own.

Eager to impress, I showed Morag a big bathroom with a huge cast iron bath that was plumbed into both the hot and the cold water, and it could be emptied by taking out a plug. It was like something out of a Hollywood film that Morag and I - although forbidden the cinema - had seen by playing truant on a school trip to Aberdeen.

Morag became excited at each new discovery - the heavy old-fashioned furniture, the drawers full of white, starched household linen. David had sixteen different suits, and we counted thirty-two shirts. There was a wardrobe and chest full of women's clothes that we decided must have belonged to his dead wife.

One large, walk-in cupboard was filled entirely with wet weather clothes: big black and white fishermen's rubber boots and rubber coats, souwesters, fishermen's aprons and smocks; even a rubber diving suit. "I expect he'll take you boating with him" Morag said.

Mother, Father and I walked in total silence to David's house. There we sat in the living room, and Father prompted me. There seemed to be a silence filled with the ticking of the grandfather clock then David got up, walked over and picked me off the sofa and embraced me.



"My dear, my dear," he said. "Thank you, thank you". He tried to kiss me clumsily with his thick lips.

Father saw no point in delay. Next Wednesday, he thought, would suit everyone. David agreed, then unlocked a steel cashbox and gave my mother money for my wedding trousseau.

I went with Mother to the shops in Aberdeen - the third time in my life I'd been on a train, and the first time where there had not been a religious purpose. Fifty pounds to spend - I was so excited I kept thinking I was going to faint. We came back with so many parcels that I thought I was in the middle of a dream. I convinced myself this was the natural way of things - anything else was fantasy.

WEDDING NIGHT

It was snowing hard from the sea on our wedding day - 14th February 1956 - and I wore my new coat with a fur collar and cuffs, and David had on a white rubber-

lined riding mac. It was one week before his forty-second birthday, and I was not yet nineteen.

There is nothing very special about our weddings before the Congregation: funerals are more of an occasion as the deceased is assured of redemption and everlasting life while husband and wife still have to earn it. We had a nice meal of soup and fried fish with chips at a restaurant (paid for by my husband), then family and a few guests went to David's house.

While they sat down to a high tea with tatty scones in the living room, my youngest sister Mary helped me to unpack and hang my new clothes in my newly decorated bedroom. She arranged my few personal possession, my two dolls and a cuddly elephant carefully on the pillow. Then we both had a little cry because Mary was going to miss me.

We went downstairs and a blessing was asked. We all knelt in silent prayer, David next to me. Then there were hugs and good wishes, and they departed saying they wanted to be home before dark.

I was asked if I had ever tasted champagne. I certainly hadn't. Wasn't it a sin? David smiled and shook his head. Then I was enjoying the bubbles going up my nose and such a lovely feeling that I wondered why it was considered to be wicked to be drinking alcohol at a time like this.

Instead of a dressing gown David was wearing a rubber macintosh.

I asked David what other sinful things he had in mind? Again he smiled, and a few minutes later I was seated on his lap in the armchair, a little intoxicated from three glasses of champagne, watching on his small black and white television set a play - 'The Winslow Boy'.

This would have shocked my mother and father as members of the Brethren are opposed to all forms of broadcasting because it was controlled by the devil. My first experience of television, I cried at the sad parts and cheered when the boy was found at the end to be innocent of stealing the postal order.

It was nice to discover that David did not take our stern religious instructions and prohibitions seriously, despite all his promises and protestations. The Brethren are against all leisure activities such as dancing, theatre and the cinema, and even avoid eating in public places. So I decided it might be quite nice to be married to a man who made his own decisions and was just a little bit wicked. And we had this big house to live in so everyone would envy me - even though encouraging envy was a sin.

We sat up until after midnight - later than I had ever been allowed up. We listened to the radio, then I had a glass of soda water poured from an amazing bottle with a handle on the top that you just pressed and out came the bubbly water. David poured in a finger of his Scotch whisky - even more sin - and it made me cough which made him laugh. Saying that it was time for bed, he kissed me again with his thick lips. It was not much nicer than the previous time, but I decided, as I watched him bank up the fire with smokey slack, that I would probably get to like even that in time.

David then asked me if I would like to be "left alone tonight". He added that he would quite understand. I said nervously that I would leave it to him to decide as I had promised my mother that I would do what The Bible expected of a married woman.

He thought about that. He said I no longer had to listen to advice from my mother - or from The Bible as neither her nor God's word were now in charge of my life - instead he was. I was to remember that, he was now my husband and I must learn to obey him in everything. He was the one best fitted to make me happy.

Sarah's Story

"I don't ask you, Sarah, to love me, but just to respect me and to try and please me over some of the things I shall ask you to do for me, even if they may seem strange to you. You must promise me never to speak about them to anyone, not even your mother. If you promise that then I'm sure you will be happy here as my wife."

I did not know what he meant, but I promised him and he seemed pleased. I said I would do my best to be a good wife and, if it had to be done, perhaps we should get it over with?

He put some whisky in my glass and let me use the syphon to fill it with bubbles. Then he made me drink it down quickly.

I was used to getting undressed before the fire in the living room, but in this bedroom there was ice even inside the window. Even though the whisky had warmed me and there were six blankets on the bed I was shivering.

I lay there in the darkness, my knees pulled up under my chin, for what seemed like an hour. Then the door opened slowly. I was aware of a smell and, in the fumbling darkness David found me. I realised the smell was rubber. Instead of a dressing gown David was wearing a rubber macintosh. He pulled up the layers of blankets and sat on the edge of the bed to remove the mac. Then he got under the blankets and laid his cold form next to me.

Nothing was said. David placed an arm over me and then began to move himself slowly on top of me, at the same time pulling up my new nightdress. I asked him in a desperate whisper if we should say a prayer? The shadowy, heavy figure only grunted. He then placed himself between my legs, pushing them apart. I heard him say 'Sarah' and I whispered 'Yes' but he only grunted again. With eyes shut tight, I said a prayer, one I had been taught as a small child to use when I was frightened.

Unlike my mother, my eldest sister had been eager to offer advice: "When he comes to open your oyster, spread your legs wide as you can and bend your knees." Having seen the treatment for oysters in the fish market, the idea of a brutal prising apart made me shudder.

My sister had laughed. "Save your shivers 'til you see and feel the oyster knife". She patted her bulging front. "Start thinkin' on your kicking lump. It's soon done." She made me press her breast, and a thin liquid dripped from a thick, red nipple. "You'll soon be milking too but -" she looked critically at me, " -you'll have to grow yours bigger if you're to suckle his bairns."

There was no mention of pleasure. Yet it was nothing like they had led me to expect. There was something down there among the stiff hairs, something that seemed to be prodding at me. It did not seem to belong to him, rather it was like a small

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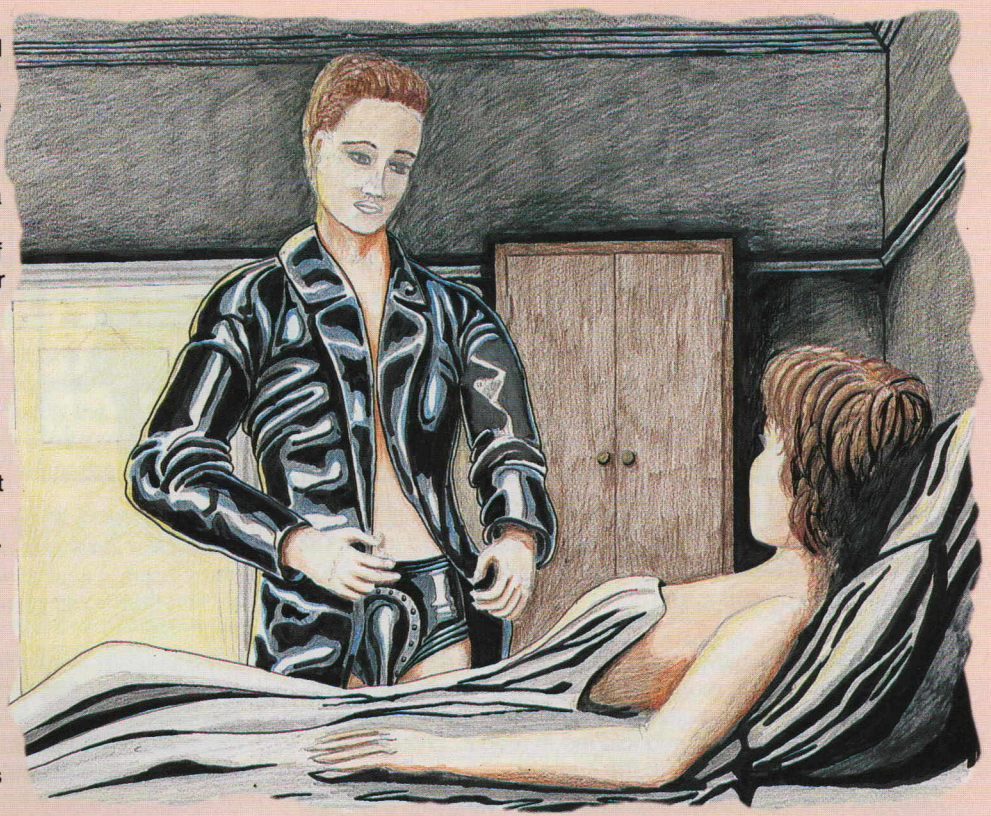
pet that he had brought along and was now loose in the bed playing, exploring. I could easily be made to believe that this was an evil thing, a small demon, because he did not seem to be in control of it.

The caressing and browsing among my hairs then stopped. There was now a pressure lower down that was not unpleasant, just mysterious. I was aware of the pressure increasing, and I could hear his short breaths and I could smell rubber again.

The flesh parted slowly and then there was a tightness that was sharp; then came a stronger pressure. The 'oyster' split and something seemed to be entering right into my stomach. Not only that it was moving and turning and I could feel myself damp around the tops of my legs.

There was no pain, just a sensation of discomfort with his weight pressing me into the bed and something moving around inside me making me feel sticky. Then came a great gush of hot liquid that I could feel splashing inside me - "his seed".



To my relief it had not taken as long as I expected, nor had it hurt as I my sister had warned it would. The stubble on his chin rubbing my cheek, together with his weight seemed to hurt more than the ruthless pushing between my legs.

Now it was over, he gave a long sigh, then got out of the bed and collected his macintosh and walked to the door. He asked me if I was all right? It hadn't been too bad had it? I said no it hadn't. I somehow assumed David had not enjoyed it any more than I did. How could you like anything that left you so sticky?

I got out of bed and put on the light. On the centre of the sheet was a semi-circular red stain and several grey patches. It seemed to be so nasty that it had to be done with the same part of him that he used to get rid of his water down the toilet. This surely was a mystery of God.

I was aware of the pressure increasing, and I could hear his short breaths and I could smell rubber again

I puzzled over this as I lay in a hot bath watching the water turn pink. Yet I was quite pleased with myself. I had behaved even better than Mother might have expected of me.

As I walked back along the cold corridor I saw a light under his door. I pushed it open and he was sitting in bed reading, the rubber macintosh draped over the end of the bed, a pair of tall rubber boots on the floor next to them. He looked up surprised. I pulled my topcoat around me and sat on the end of his bed. "How," I asked, "will I know when I'm going to have your baby?"

He looked at me over his glasses. "When is your period due?" He saw me looking puzzled. "Menstruation -your monthly cycle - has that not be explained to you?"

I thought about it. I shook my head. "You mean The Curse - Eve's Curse. That surely is the sign of her punishment for her sin in the Garden of Eden."

He put down the book. "Haven't you been told anything?"

Again I shook my head. He looked annoyed. "It is not my business to tell you these women's things. But I will ask you again - when is The Curse due?"

"Next week I think."

"Then you must tell me if it does not arrive, and I will send you to see the doctor."

"My sister started being very sick every morning."

"That is another sign".

"Do you think it will happen soon?"

He stared at me over his spectacles. "You're a healthy young woman at a peak age for gestation. Your sister did not seem to have any trouble so maybe you can think about buying yourself a pretty maternity frock to wear in the spring."

I wanted to ask what 'gestation' meant but he put his book on the bedside table. "Goodnight Sarah. Now close the door please - it is late and I have surgery in the morning."

MACINTOSH MARRIAGE

I didn't sleep much. The bed was so strange; the room was strange and the house full of creeping noises. I couldn't remember ever being away from home before. Perhaps once or twice but always with my sister sharing the room, and whose soft breathing had orchestrated my nights as long as I could remember.

I got up at five o'clock in a desperately cold February dawn. I dressed as quickly and as quietly as possible in my slacks, thick socks and a thick jumper and I went down to the kitchen.

So began the first of my battles with a hideous iron stove that hated me as much as I was to come to hate it. It had been bequeathed to me by Mrs Macbean. "I'll noo take the orders from yon chit of a girl. I'll noo call her Mistress". She had left the day before the wedding with a week's wages.

David appeared. He didn't say good morning, or ask after his bride, or attempt to give her a kiss. He just advised me to try some paraffin. That didn't work either. So I gave up, turned to the old gas stove and made my first attempt at his breakfast of porridge, eggs, bacon, toast and strong tea in huge brown mugs. It was not a success and David left most of it.

After that he read the paper, then he said he'd be back for lunch at one o'clock. He gave me a little pat and went to the door. "Get whatever you need, there's money in the drawer." He paused. "I'd rather you did not ask anyone to the house without asking my permission first. And I don't want any of your family in the house unless I am here. Is that clear?" I nodded. Then he was gone.

I managed to get the old stove lit and then rushed down the brae to the shops with more money than Mother had at any one

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time - although David had warned me I had to account to him for every halfpenny. I suppose I bought all the wrong things as all the shopkeepers wanted to talk to me and congratulate me, and so it was a rush preparing and cooking a lunch that was not exactly a success.

David did not complain, but he took me to the room that was his private library with more books than I had ever seen in my life. He took down a huge tome entitled 'Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management' and told me to read it. Then he got into the car and drove back to the surgery.

High tea at six was more of a success -scones and jam sandwiches and plenty of tea. Then we sat in the lounge with my studying Mrs Beeton until he decided there was something he wanted to watch on the flickering television. At eight o'clock he announced it was time for bed and supervised my banking up the fire and feeding the ancient stove in the kitchen with fuel.

As I was going up the stairs and he was seeing to the locking of the doors and switching off of the lights, he said there was some Vaseline in the bathroom that I could use if I was still sore. He said he would be along to see me in a few minutes.

RUBBER SEX

The door opened in the darkness and again I could smell rubber. This time he didn't take off the macintosh before getting into bed. I tried to say something about him being more comfortable without the mac, but he ignored me. I closed my eyes and pressed my lips together as I felt him quickly push deep inside me. His mac began to entangle with my nightdress as he began to push in and out, grunting with the effort. I tried to free it but he pushed it round me and I could feel the large buttons pressing circles in my breasts. I put down my hand and realised that he was also wearing smooth, tight-fitting pants almost certainly of rubber, and it was these I had smelt the previous night.

It seemed to take a bit longer this time, but then he grunted and I felt the gush of his seed. Almost immediately he withdrew, lifted himself off and pulled on the rubber boots I had seen beside his bed the previous night. Although his room was only down the corridor, I could sense him in the dark buttoning up his macintosh before wishing me goodnight and swishing away.

I did a bit better with the next lunch as I'd brought in ready cooked pies. He seemed pleased and smiled at me. As there was no surgery on Saturday afternoon he followed me around the house as I did what cleaning I thought should be done. He followed me from room to room saying little but looking and sometimes touching. It was flattering, then disconcerting, and finally irritating. If he sat in a chair his eyes would follow me around the room, silent observers to my every fumbling move.

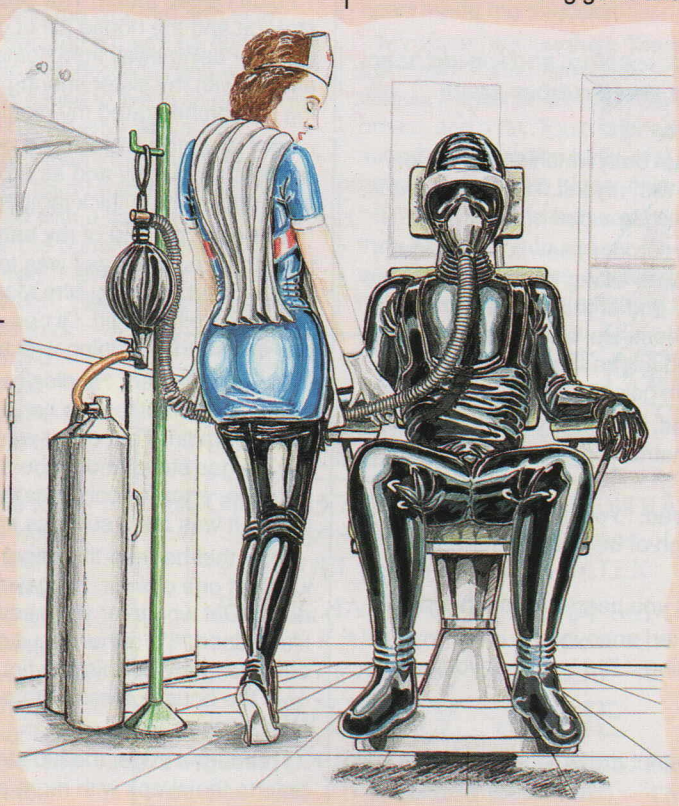
"You like looking at me", I said. He nodded. "I want to please you if I can," I said lamely. There was just one thing I could do for him that would please him. I asked him eagerly what this might be.

It was really, David explained, quite simple. I must wear a macintosh, hat and rubber boots whenever I went out. He showed me a black rubber mac and a hat he had bought for me, and then he produced three more pairs of rubber boots - calf and knee high and a pair like those the fishermen wore down at the docks that went right up the legs - all new, all my size. I was quite flattered. He was being a little, I thought, overprotective even though we lived in a wet climate here on a north-facing coast.

I wasn't surprised to find he was wearing rubber gloves as well as the rubber pants that I could now see had a flap on the front with small studs.

I tried them on and he seemed to enjoy doing up the buttons and fastening the belts. Then he stood back to admire the effect and seemed genuinely pleased.

"You seem to like rubber", I said. "You even wear it at night instead of a dressing gown and slippers. Is it because it's warmer?"



Yes, he admitted he did like rubber. He hoped that I would come to like wearing it too. He gave me a little speech about the wonderful, rarely appreciated qualities of rubber, describing it as being capable of improving health and comfort and peace of mind and giving pleasure. I suppose I believed him.

I suppose I believed him to the point where, when that night he came into my bed, I wasn't surprised to find he was wearing rubber gloves as well as the rubber pants that I could now see had a flap on the front with small studs. He did not unbutton or unstrap the top of the mac, nor did he take off the rubber boots until I complained they would tear the sheets and blankets. The solution he decided was next time to take the blankets from the bed and to avoid the cold, I should wear a warm rubber macintosh as well.

I heard the studs on the flap being parted and then he surprised me by putting his gloved fingers in my hole. I felt a tingling sensation as he fished about as though he was looking for something. I had this silly idea this was some medical technique - linked with the rubber -that older men needed to use to make sure all the seed went up right into the womb.

The rubber gloved fingers playing up and down made me feel quite strange and excited. I heard myself sighing with pleasure when he gushed, and decided this was a sign. As he was sitting on the edge of the bed pulling on his rubber boots, I whispered to him "Will you mind if it's not a boy?" He just grunted.

Sunday, and I was eager to show myself and my husband off at the chapel. I then discovered that my promise to wear my mac was not to be confined to wet days but to the dull ones as well. There was certainly a cold February wind, but I was keen to wear the coat with the fur collar I had got for the wedding.

The rubber gloved fingers playing up and down made me feel quite strange and excited.

We had a little argument about it but David made me believe that his first wife had died not from cancer but from pneumonia caught after getting wet. He insisted on dressing me himself, and spent some minutes inspecting me and adjusting the rain hat.

I looked in the mirror and decided that perhaps David had guided me correctly for the drab black mac and black rubber boots were suitably sombre for the chapel whereas my new fur-trimmed coat would only invite the sins of vanity and envy.

Sunday was a day of prohibition and it felt strange - even after only four days - not to hear him rustling towards me in the dark. I think I actually missed the thrusts and the grunting and the smell of warm rubber, but I did have a good night's sleep.

On the Monday night David persuaded me to put on one of the rubber macintoshes to go to bed. He was right - it was a bit warmer, especially when I added, at his suggestion, the rubber boots. There was also the benefit, as I found on the Tuesday night, that I no longer had to keep changing and washing the sheets as any stains came off the rubber lining of my mac with a damp cloth.

Not having the blankets also allowed us more freedom of movement, and it now took longer. My sister's husband had managed it in less than a minute - so she had told me - but David - because of his age I supposed - now seemed to go on and on, puffing away and grunting.

It was not as unpleasant as I had been encouraged to believe; suddenly I found myself wriggling my toes around inside my boots and getting lovely sensations despite his weight and my discomfort as his stubbly chin rubbed my face. I convinced myself that the exciting sensations I was now feeling as he gushed into me were further confirmation of God's plans for me. I promised myself to read Numbers 30 and 31 most carefully as I had been told.

On the Saturday morning I awoke feeling sick. My announcement that I was "with child" was promptly dispelled in the toilet when I saw the red stains. I burst into tears - possibly relief! David only laughed saying that at least I would not need to use sanitary towels any more. He added that before I started thinking about babies it might be advisable for me first to get the housework into a routine and concentrate on improving my cooking and cleaning skills.

The Bible contains no real guidance on running a house that was large and neglected, and the only help he seemed prepared to find for me was Mrs Macullan, an elderly daily woman who came every morning for three hours.

I had been brought up to regard meals as something that stopped morning, afternoon and evening from colliding with each other. David didn't agree. David was a big eater. David was a punctual eater. He demanded his breakfast at a quarter to eight, lunch at one, supper at six. Not a minute before the time, nor a minute after. He stated his preferences very clearly and there were no deviations from the menus he listed for me.

If I had even been a good plain cook all would have been well, but I was disorganised and incapable of coping with the old unreliable gas cooker or the huge range that was the sole means of hot water and heating for the old house.

If David had had some modicum of patience and understanding I might have won in the end. As it was, more burnt and undercooked food got thrown away than got eaten. After three weeks the daily woman was paid to stay on to get the lunch. Her cooking was dreadful but it seemed to be more appreciated than mine because it was there, sitting in greasy gravy thickened with cornflour, punctually at one.

Washing and ironing were undertaken once a week by a laundry woman who came to the house and struggled with the huge red copper wash tub. This was another of my failures. Even sewing on a button was a major undertaking and most of this work was delegated secretly to my younger sister.

I don't remember really caring much about this. I supposed I cared about the criticisms and the quarrels, but while I could escape into the world of literature I didn't mind what happened to the house. For, having discovered his library, I soon became a happy little bookworm.

I sat there every spare moment I could find. I bought chocolates in boxes which were still rationed but now on display in the shops - and hitherto forbidden me except on special holidays. I sat and worked through Thomas Hardy, Sir Walter Scott, Dickens and so many authors that had just been names to me to the accompaniment of caramel, nougat, rum truffle, coffee cream and vanilla fudge.

There was a cupboard in the library that was locked. I was curious, so I used an old knife, and inside was a pile of magazines and catalogues all to do with wearing rubber. There were also one or two books, but they seemed dull except for one with a promising romantic title that I decided I would read. It was called Lady Chatterley's Lover, by D.H. Lawrence. The story and characters I really liked but the descriptions of their cleav-

Sarah's Story

ing together were incomprehensible but at the same time rather exciting. Was that how titled people really behaved? The real world had nothing to do with the world of literature. It was a place to go where I could hide. Maybe one day I would write a book? I began to keep this diary.

NOT WITHOUT RUBBER

On Wednesdays the surgery was closed, and David would spend the morning dealing with the paperwork. One Wednesday, after lunch, he said if I would I wear my new black macintosh and my boots, even though it was sunny, he would walk me back to the surgery and show me round.

After the explanations of the dental equipment he asked me to help him with something. He locked the door and from a cupboard produced a rubber suit something like divers wear. He proceeded to undress and put on a pair of rubber pants. Then I helped him into the suit and he sat in the dental chair and pulled on a pair of chest-high white rubber waders such as the fishermen on the trawlers used.

There was a mask and hood that had to be fitted until he was totally enclosed in rubber except for his nose and mouth. After giving me instructions - which he made me repeat - I had to fit the anaesthetic mask to his face. This was connected to two huge cylinders and normally used for putting the patients to sleep for tooth extractions.

I had to follow his hand signals to give him a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen through the mask, carefully following the levels on the valves. After a few minutes - I had to watch the clock on the surgery wall - I switched everything off and got him out of the rubber suit.

... he sat in the dental chair and pulled on a pair of chest-high white rubber waders ...

He described this as being a form of 'relaxation' for him. It was only later, as these surgery sessions became more frequent and elaborate - and where I had to dress in rubber as a dental nurse - that I came to realise that the gas acted like a drug. I suppose it was something akin to glue-sniffing as his eyes would go wild and he would have strange and sometimes frightening hallucinations.

With all this strange behaviour - which I kept telling myself was something that all wives had to content with - I tried to distance myself from the family who I knew were scandalised by what little they had guessed of our behaviour. I wasn't living up to their picture of the mistress of the 'gran hoose up the brae'. I didn't even dress the part.

Mother was puzzled when I met her in town dressed again in the black raincoat, black kneeboots and black souwester on an autumn day without a sign of rain. Even though going to restaurants is supposed to be sinful, she took me to the tearooms, sat me down and told me that perhaps it was just a test of obedience. She directed me to read 1 Corinthians where it says that the wife must accept the direction of her husband in all things, even in the manner of dress. Things would soon change when there was a child.

Mother asked if everything was all right in that direction. She urged me "to pray for a blessing on the marriage before your sister shames you with a second". Ignoring my attempts to change the subject, she gave me a graphic description, over the tea and scones, of what had happened after my sister's waters had broken. "Your father and I were there in the hall and we went on our knees, praying all night as she screamed for merciful Jesus to help her in her agony. When your time comes, be sure we will be there too praying for you."

Excusing myself and hurrying away, I remember wondering how long before they would be praying for me since David and I were now dressing up in rubber for him to enter me three or four times a week - not just in the bedroom at night but sometimes on the sofa, or the lounge floor, or even in the surgery after he had got out of his rubber suit.

About a month after this conversation David appeared one day with an amazing one-piece suit made in black rubber for me. This explained why earlier he had spent an evening mysteriously taking all my measurements. I had hoped it was for a new dress. I looked at his curious tight-fitting garment which David said he would like me to wear under the macintoshes.

It was a struggle to get it on and, although I imagined his real intention was to hide my ugly shape, I noticed I seemed to be getting more attention from David than usual and he seemed to become very excited. I sat in the suit for an hour - "to stretch it", he said - and it seemed to please him so I gave him a kiss. That got him more excited and soon he was showing me the concealed zip between the legs of the suit. It was the first time he had entered me standing up and it was a most amazing experience.

Something seemed to snap, and I remember finishing on the floor and this time I was on top of David and he was going into me from below and, for the first time, I could actually see what he was doing - and with what! I had an orgasm just like the description in the book 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'; a description that I had refused to believe.

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Were orgasms somehow connected with wearing rubber? My sister had told me her husband entered her without her even wearing a nightdress. Since she was - much to her displeasure - pregnant again where I still had the Curse to contend with every month, I felt I had to say something to David. He dismissed it, saying he could not "enjoy it" unless he was dressed in rubber.

I could not see wearing rubber being any kind of sin. Perhaps there were husbands who chose other materials? I decided the problem lay with God. My sister was a regular attender at the Chapel and so God had "looked on her favourably" as it said in The Bible.

David had never been comfortable following the practices of the Congregation and nor was I. I think there was some element of guilt for I worried about the books I was reading and the programmes he and I listened to on the radio or on our small black and white television set. It showed us a different, happier world whereas our religion certainly seemed to concentrate on the darker side of human nature, with anything that suggested pleasure being regarded as 'sin'. Besides it was he that wanted a son - I didn't: my mother's account of my sister's pregnancy and labour filled me with terror and dread.

I had brought a kitchen knife with me and planned to cut the rubber below the waist when I got out far enough so that the boots would flood and pull me under.

He bought me two more raincoats - ordering them by post from London. He bought a skirt and trousers in the same black rubber bonded to a brown woven cloth. David was so pleased when I said I liked them. He now insisted on us both going out fishing or walking in the worst rain storms dressed in layers of rubber. Best of all he liked to see me walking or standing against the wind on the tideline, each of us getting soaked with the spray.

None of this I really minded. The problem was not so much the obsession with rubber which I think I could understand but the dark, angry moods - "a Scottish trait", said my mother.

After being castigated for not attending the Chapel, I confessed to mother that each night we sinned by drinking Scotch whisky and we watched television.

Obedience to my husband was a "duty" but there was a "higher duty" and through my example and my prayers I must direct him to The Light of Jesus. I must read Thessalonians to him instead of turning on the radio and the television - the devil's instruments. "God will deny you a child while you are both in a state of sin".

A state of sin seemed to be preferable to pregnancy and I had far more serious matters to concern me. My diary reads like a hysterical record of my shortcomings from no dry towels in the bathroom to failure to order coal for the terrifying stove in the kitchen. It is a record of worsening quarrels over the grocery bills; of tears because I left a tideline in the bath, and his anger because I wouldn't dress up with him in rubber every time in the evenings.

By the following Spring, the marriage seemed to be doomed because of my shortcomings as a homemaker, and I had an overwhelming sense of failure. Then, one day in April, I passed out in the fish market and was rushed to the hospital. It was a miscarriage. I think I was relieved but then, a short while later, I listened at the door to a row between my father and David. David had refused to put more money into my father's failing business. I heard David say, "And why should I pay more money for a daughter you have given me who can't cook, clean or sew and is also barren".

It was the word "barren" that devastated me. I was in such a state that I decided suicide was my only way to end my daily misery. God would, I decided, forgive me because I was married to an evil man who had led me into the ways of sin and evil. I even convinced myself that God had ordered me to choose this form of escape from even greater evils! I wrote all this in my suicide note.

I decided to drown myself in the sea. One cold, wet afternoon I put on my rubber suit and a rubber blouse so I would be warm, then a pair of his chest waders which came up almost to my chin. I had to strap the rubber to my waist as well as my shoulders to keep them up. I drank a large whisky and swallowed a bottle of aspirins, then I put on his big souwester and my macintosh and walked - with some difficulty because of the weight of the boots - down the brae and out to the tideline. I had brought a kitchen knife with me and planned to cut the rubber below the waist when I got out far enough so that the boots would flood and pull me under.

I sat on the seawall, completely calm, waiting for the tide to come right in. I undid the top buttons on my mac as I planned to stab myself just before I went under the waves. I remember thinking with cold clarity that I would need to use both hands to get the knife in under my left breast and I wanted any folds on the waders out of the way! I carefully adjusted the braces holding up the waders and spent some time rehearsing the positioning of the knife that I would hold under the cover of the mac.

I got up, dipped my boots in the water and walked out slowly until the waves were lapping first at my knees, then my thighs, then my waist. Realising I had left the knife on the seawall, I turned to get it only to see that I was being watched by two of the local fishermen. I took fright. By the time I had got back to the seawall my mood had changed to rage.

As I walked back up the brae, I suddenly understood I could be as cruel to David as he was to me.

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Sarah's Story

I stood watching while my husband 'dressed up', glancing every few moments at me, tiny beads of sweat forming in his bushy eyebrows. I would marvel at the amazing metamorphosis, the mental and physical reaction that could sometimes be quite frightening. I seemed so small. He seemed so large. Yet, I told myself, I was the one with the mysterious power of 'sex'. D.H. Lawrence had said that about Lady Chatterley and he was right. All I had to do was to refuse him.

Once he was dressed, he was ready; a rubber-gloved hand on what was all prepared to be pushed into me. Sometimes I would be asked to parade for him, or wear some other garment, gloves or boots. We didn't seem to say much. For a minute or two he would play his hands over me, touching and feeling the smooth rubber. Then I would be taken to the sofa, or to his bedroom, and there he would waste no time. Sometimes we wouldn't even get that far and would begin with my back to the bannisters or against a door frame. At any stage I could say no.

But would I? When the wild shivers and shocks went down inside my boots or into my gloves, when I could smell and taste this mysterious rubber in my mouth and then feel myself caving in, I realised that exercising my discovered prowess would not

... there would probably be other straps and buttons and zips, my "lover" all the time becoming more excited as I worked through the layers of protection ...

be easy, yet this was the only time I knew I had control over the man I married. I could fail at everything else but not at this. As he went in with a long grunt, I often wanted to shout. Sometimes I did.

Afterwards I would lie there and imagine myself to be the heroine in one of the films I had seen, or in a book I had read. Then I would get up and bustle about, getting a meal or a drink for him until the rubber became so uncomfortable it had to come off and I could deal with the leak that always followed.

I suppose, despite the regular rows, we were not unhappy. We seemed to need nobody else; indeed we had no one else since my parents had abandoned us and forbidden my brothers and sisters any contact. Morag -the only friend that David had permitted me - was now living in Edinburgh, so we were forced back on ourselves -which I now see made the rows so much worse.

The rows did not seem to harm our rubber intimacies. Sometimes we would go to the quay to watch the fishermen competing for a trophy or go to point-to-point racing in the country. I would wear the long black rubber, double-breasted coat and the shiny rubber knee boots; David would wear something similar and we would walk around, not talking to anyone, and I believed that he was getting pleasure from showing me off in this drab disguise.

Quite often if it rained - and here; in this part of Scotland, it did quite often - he would call me up from the surgery if he wasn't busy and ask me to make an excuse to 'Sir Clifford Chatterley'. Then he would come to the house and we would get into the layers of rubber, help each into the boots, fasten each other into the raincoats and tie the souwesters or fix the cowls. Then we would go off in the car to the sea or up into the hills either to walk and splash and wade or else seek out a secluded spot for us.

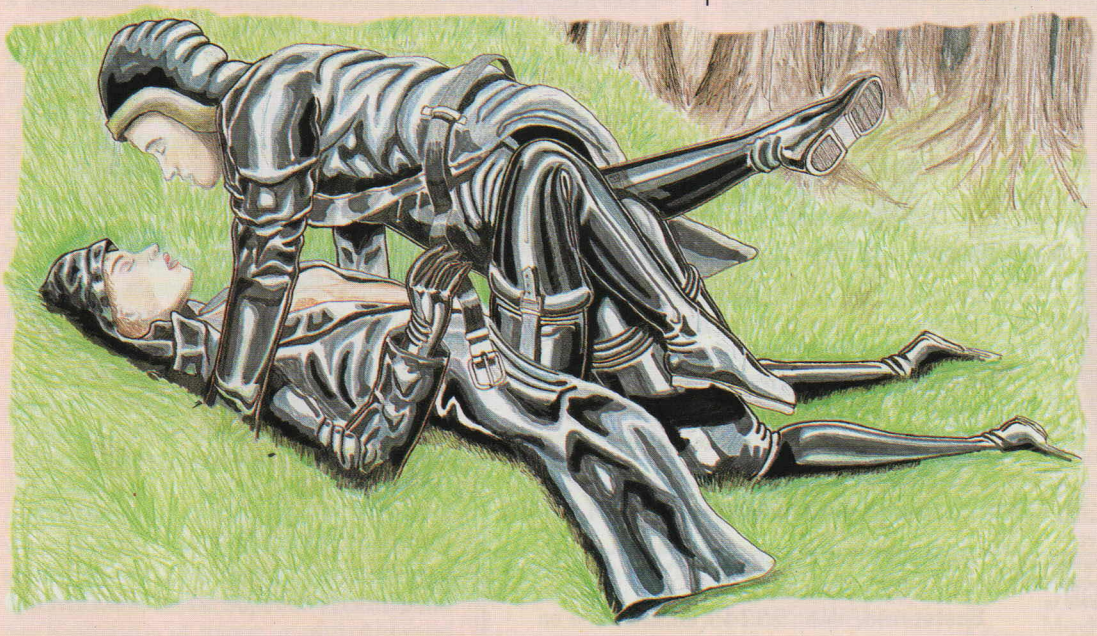
We would sit for a while then I would be expected to be the passionate "mistress". One by one I would undo the buttons first on his mac and then on mine. There were the waist belts to unbuckle. Then there would probably be other straps and buttons and zips, my "lover" all the time becoming more excited as I worked through the layers of protection: now it was the turn of the rubber gloved fingers. The boot straps would have to be eased on the buckles so I could bend my knees. Then he could begin.

I must have crushed a great deal of grass and wild flowers on those days. I came to know every raindrop in Scotland, and, if rainwater is good for the complexion, then mine must have been perfect since it was the only part he permitted me to expose to the elements.

Then there were the regular Wednesdays in the surgery when I would dress as a dental nurse in a rubber uniform and he would be the "patient" totally enclosed in rubber, and then I would administer the anaesthetic until he went off into his mysterious drugged dream world for an hour or more. When he emerged it was usual for me to remove enough of the rubber to get at him and I would climb on him in the chair and he would go into me.

Afterwards I would use a rubber douche -something I had selected from the medical catalogues that David had in surgery. I was intrigued by the idea, bought one and was not disappointed as I liked the splashing feeling of the warm water. Its other use as a contraceptive never really entered my thinking.

The absurdity (and the dangers) of all this also never really crossed my mind. The only awareness I had was that this enjoyment of ours and our dressing-up in rubber could be classed as an evil indulgence. So I created for us a private world for our "evil indulgence" where we never had to be Sarah and David. They were not, I decided, a very nice couple for they tended to squabble over such petty things.



This went on for three years until, in the hot summer of 1959, it all seemed to catch up with me. Every time now that I went to don the rubber, I started to feel sick and I felt so tired and disinterested. "You've made me ill", I shouted at him one morning. This was after a night when I had refused him and also after one of our rows about some silly domestic problem.

"Go to a doctor then, I can't help you any more," he replied.

I remember so clearly using the doctor's phone to ring David at the surgery, and insisting I speak to him.

It took seconds I could have counted for the news to sink in. "You don't mean?" I told him I did mean just that.

He was so excited he cancelled his appointments and rushed home from the surgery just so I could tell him again how Dr McLean had insisted on an examination of "y'r uterus", and then had looked up through his thick spectacles. "Mrs Murray, did y'r noo ken y'r mir th'n twa months wit y'r wee bairn."

David hugged and hugged me. He poured out apologies and we celebrated with champagne. For the second time I enjoyed the bubbles going up my nose.

Now things were going to be very different. I told myself this when, a fortnight later, I unwrapped his present and put on - trembling - the lovely pale yellow latex maternity smock for the very first time and let the father-to-be stroke the soft rubber and pat the baby I was going to give him.

Little did I guess, though, that there were going to be so many encores, and this latex smock was going to be, over the next few years, the most worn, most used, garment in my entire wardrobe. I may have been a rotten housekeeper but I made up for my shortcomings in being - as David described it - "a-made-to-measure mother".

1959 was a beginning - a new and wonderful beginning for David and I. The son he wanted arrived in February 1960 to be followed by his first daughter in the March of the following year.

Just how much of the credit for the love and the success that came belatedly to this marriage is owed to me and how much to the mysterious power of rubber I have to leave it to you to decide.

This is extracted from the early chapters of Sarah's Story. She goes on to describe the arrival of five more children -four of them born in New Zealand where they emigrated in 1968 following a scandal with the British Dental Association warning David he could be struck off if his addiction to nitrous oxide was not cured. His drug-taking ended, and in New Zealand David settled down happily with his family. Dressing in rubber continued as "something we both enjoyed and I like to think of it as being the elastic for our marriage for I never really was able to live up to his expectations of a good housekeeper and cook."

David died in 1983, aged 69, and Sarah now lives with her younger sister Mary and her husband who joined the family there in 1980. She was not only kind enough to give permission for this reprint of her story but even made revisions and additions not in the original diaries.

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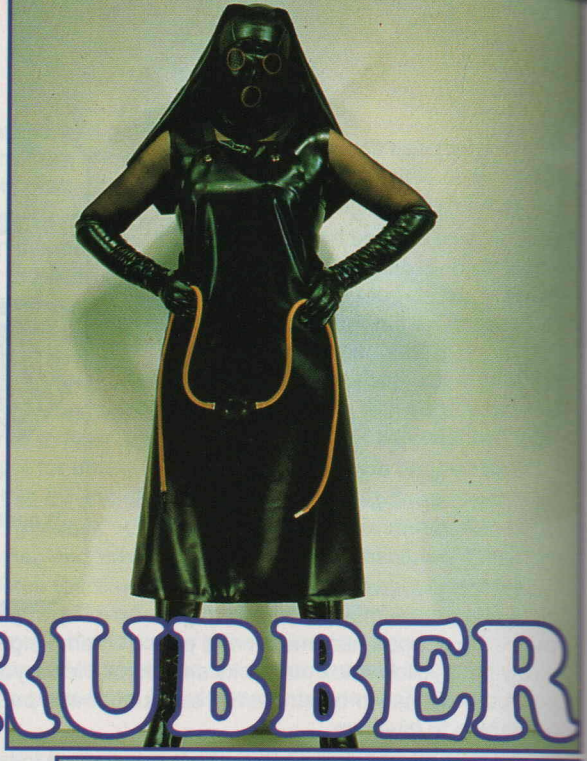

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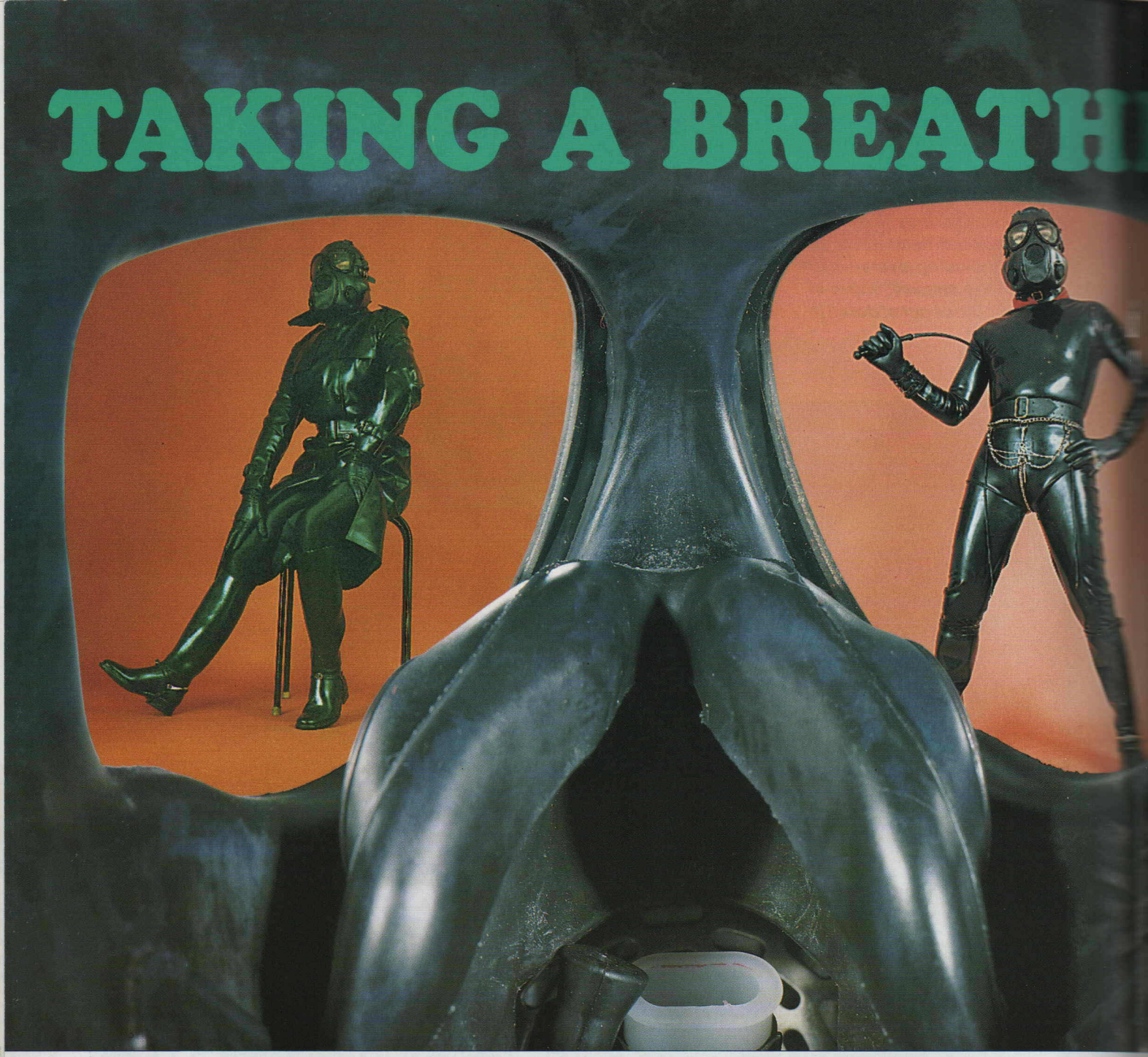


Don Mott - a reader from Scotland - examines vintage rubber pleasure.

The pong of latex rubber has always held a fascination for me, and as a youngster during the latter stages of the Second World War, I would sit encased in my little canister gasmask breathing deeply in the rubbery environment.

Over the years, the pleasure from the smell of gasmask rubber has never left me. At first I wondered whether I was abnormal in some way, but since reading *Rubberist* I am delighted to know I'm not alone in my fascination for rubbery smells.

Even as a teenager I went overboard when I came across a couple of service respirators in the attic of grandmother's large house. How I loved to wear one of the masks and taste the rubber from it.

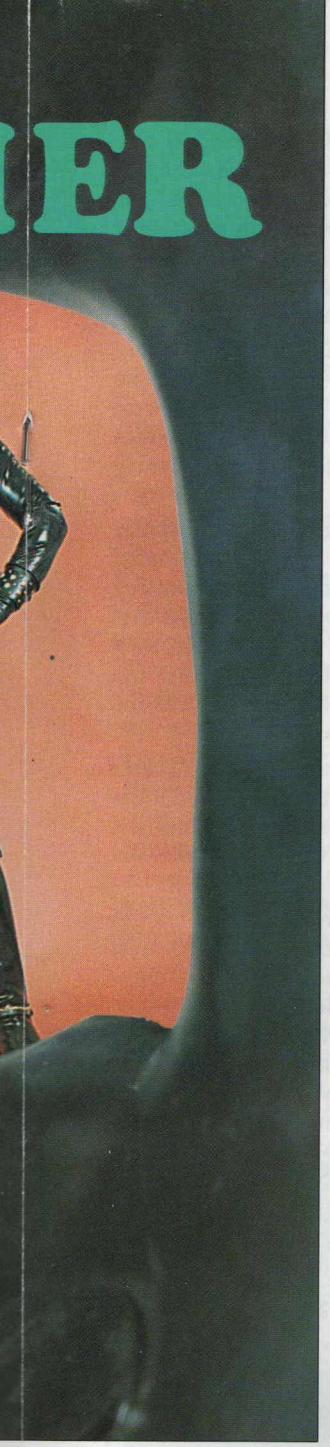
During a seaside holiday, still in my teenage years, I was introduced to anaesthetics. A nasty bout of toothache resulted in a short bus journey to the next town where two offending teeth were extracted under gas.

I still recall the antiquated machine they used on me. With a wide corrugated rubber hose attached to it, the face mask was made of hard red rubber, and before I fell asleep I remember the funny taste the mask had as it was held tightly over my nose and mouth.

Other people have often said that the rubbery smell of the mask usually made them feel sick when being 'put under' at the dentist. I enjoyed the whole episode and remember vividly that the rubbery pong, which smelled like a hot water bottle, was quickly overcome by the sweet smell of the laughing gas. It was sheer magic.

A few months later more dental work had to be carried out on me, and the epitome was reached the day I was to be there in the morning to have ten teeth taken out. Apparently I suffered from a lack of a calcium, and my teeth were too soft. Thinking it would be like the seaside dental visit, I didn't mind a bit. I actually looked forward to sniffing into that face mask. Imagine my sheer delight when it was even better on that second 'gas' visit.

After being seated in the big chair with the bright spotlight beaming down on my mouth, a tiny nasal inhaler, a McKesson, was clipped to my nostrils



An early anaesthetic machine with rubber face mask and wide corrugated rubber tubing. Part of the Wellcome Foundation Exhibition at The Science Museum, South Kensington, London.

The McKesson inhaler clips onto the nostrils, and was used in dentistry anaesthesia earlier this century. (The Science Museum, South Kensington, London).

Pictures by Don Mott

and secured firmly around the back of my head. This nosepiece had a fantastic smell of rubber, and I was told to breathe in deeply through my nose and out through my mouth.

When the gas started to come on, the effect was marvellous. I breathed deeply, and they held another rubber shield over my mouth. I can remember hearing the words: "Breathe in, blow away the smell and start counting to ten".

I obeyed. A high-pitched sound filled my ears, the taste of the gas filled my mouth, and my tongue felt very dry. I felt so relaxed. In no time I was out for the count. The memory of going under is still vivid to this day, and yet that gas session took place many years ago.

A few years later, as a student in London, I noticed quite a number of government surplus stores were selling gasmasks.

One day, however, I came across a little shop in Paddington where they sold old medical equipment. Whilst I was browsing through the contents of this rather dusty set up, the owner came over and pointed to an anaesthetic machine, complete with tubes and mask, but no cylinders of gas attached to it. "This is what they used to knock you out before an operation", he said as he handed me the black rubber face mask.

Naturally I held it to my face and took a deep breath, feeling the cold air on the back of my throat. The smell of the rubber from the mask was mind-blowing.

I guess I had a huge hard-on standing right there in front of the guy. Memories of my teenage gas days zoomed back to the front of my mind. The rubbery smell of the mask made certain of that.

Of course I couldn't buy the equipment. A poor student has limited funds. Over the months, however, I was able to pick up the odd gasmask here and there to satisfy my craving for the smell of gasmask rubber.

I remember on one occasion visiting a market stall where they were selling gasmasks. A couple of youths in their late teens were searching through the bric-a-

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brac, and one of them unearthed a service respirator. Turning to the other he quipped: "This is what we need for tonight". His pal agreed. I often wondered what these two youngsters wanted with that gasmask. Perhaps they have since become readers of *Rubberist*.

One day I asked whether I could buy an oxygen mask. The shopkeeper produced exactly what I was looking for. "This is a fiver if you want it", she said as she literally threw the pale green H oxygen mask on the counter in front of me.

I could hardly wait to get home to try the mask on. After cleaning it thoroughly, I noticed the words H MASK PRESSURE BREATHING embossed on the front. The mask was complete with green flexible rubber wide-bore corrugated tube dangling from it, and the inturned face seal was very comfortable as well. Breathing into this close-fitting mask soon reminded me of the gas days again. It was fantastic.

I always found it necessary to sterilise any second-hand mask, bearing in mind "you never know where the thing had been!" I also removed the filters and obeyed the warning issued by the Home Office about early gasmasks having asbestos in the filters.

How could I get hold of an anaesthetic face mask, I wondered? One shop quite near Harley Street sold the masks, and

A selection of gasmasks: Mickey Mouse child mask top; canister civilian mask top left; baby's portable gasmask bottom. Taken at Eden Camp Museum, Malton, North Yorkshire: Exhibition The People's War 1939-1945.

when I presented myself at the counter enquiring whether they had any old masks 'for props for a play we were doing', I was given a second hand mask for nothing. More fun breathing into that at home.

Visiting a dental surgeon friend one day, not for treatment but between his junior patients, he told me it was a "gas day". The Walton machine was right there by the chair, and had its cylinders attached. I lifted the child-size mask and plunged my nose into it.

One deep breath and I realised I had inhaled some of the gas trapped in the tubing. Wow! My friend's chairside assistant warned me that nitrous oxide is something to which people easily become addicted.

Yes, I had read about that happening in the United States. Hippy jargon used 'what a gas' when something was very exciting and enjoyable. It's thought that the term originated in the 1950s as a slang expression of approval for the stimulating effects of taking nitrous oxide or laughing gas.

I suppose it's just as well that you can't buy nitrous oxide over the counter at the local chemist shop. For me, however, it's the rubbery smell of the mask that is the turn on.

Imagine my surprise, during a visit to an exhibition at Olympia, when I walked into a mock-up operating theatre, complete with anaesthetic equipment on display. I just had to lift that mask and dip my nose into the moulded rubber. I checked that there were no cylinders of gas attached to the machine.

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I tried a bag-and-mask thing which was set out on a table at another display of life-saving equipment. Placing the mask against my face and squeezing the large black bag a couple of time produced a satisfying rubbery smell in my nostrils.

This was different. The anaesthetic equipment gave a hiss, and a tiny rubber bladder attached to the side of the machine started to inflate as I took a breath. The pneumatic seal of the mask clung to my face, and the smell of rubber was quite mind-blowing. What a great experience that turned out to be.

During an Air Show, I met a Tornado pilot who told me all about his Mark-10 oxygen mask. He took time to explain how he felt when wearing the mask. "Obviously it's reassuring because it's got some air in it", he said. "If there are problems with the oxygen, you can toggle down and the mask tightens up".

He reckoned there was virtually no rubbery smell from the oxygen mask when he was wearing it. I still wondered why there was a line of little boys standing there waiting to try on the bonedome and mask.

At an ambulance display they were showing the Entonox equipment and inviting the members of the public to have a whiff. This analgesic gas is 50% nitrous oxide and 50% pure oxygen and is self-administered for patients with pain problems during childbirth or after having broken a limb.

Handing the facemask to me, the paramedic said: "You have to hold this yourself. Press the mask hard against your face and take a deep breath. The gas will come one. Take it right down".

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My first attempt was too timid, and nothing happened. On the second pull the demand valve opened and the gas filled the mask. I inhaled deeply as instructed and the effect was terrific. There was no sick feeling, no sickly smell, only the rich taste of the mixture on the back of the tongue.

It's difficult to describe the intense feeling of satisfaction when you dip your nose into a mask which gives out Entonox. A pleasurable sensation takes over your whole being. There is an immediate state of euphoria.

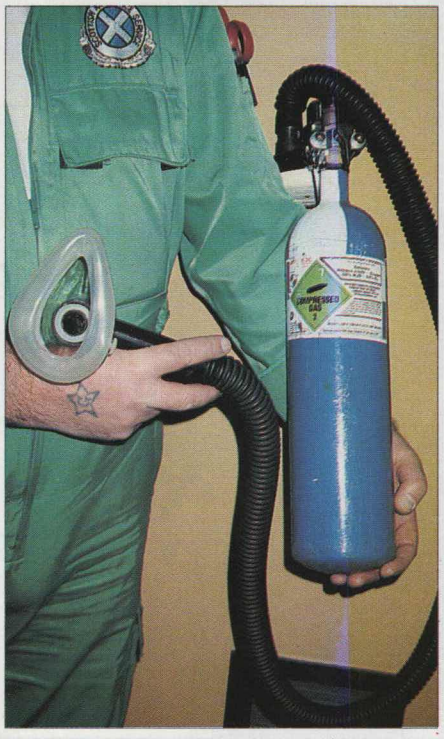
Left, an Entonox rubber face mask with wide bore corrugated tubing. Before the gas comes on, the smell of rubber from this mask is mind-blowing. Centre, an early American oxygen mask - type A8B - with rebreather bag. The mask didn't cover the mouth, thus permitting the use of a microphone. (Air & Space Museum, Washington DC). Right, an industrial respirator. Protective clothing by Martindale.

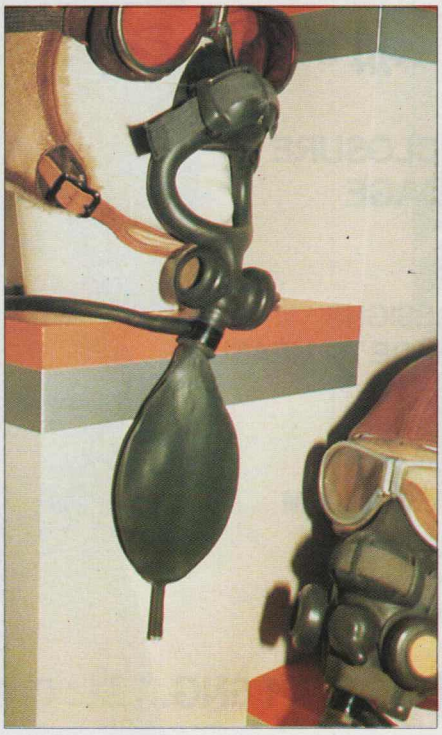
I didn't even feel light-headed. The gas can affect some people in that way. I took another couple of deep pulls on the mask and enjoyed the experience immensely. There's even a lot of pleasure in remembering the occasion. It was fantastic.

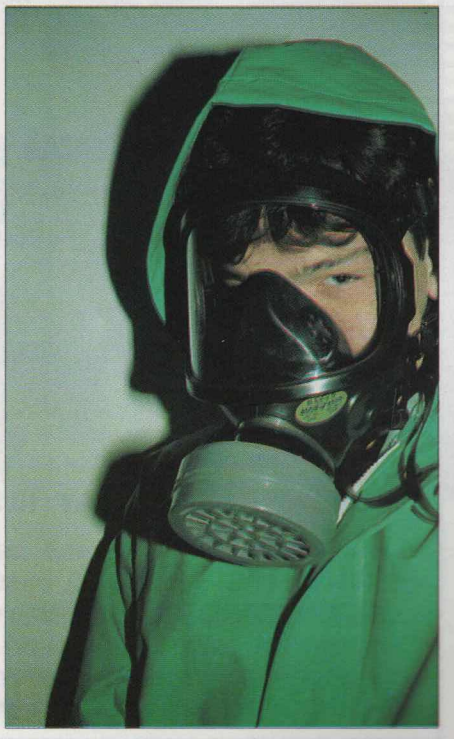
During a subsequent visit to the Accident & Emergency Department in a large city hospital, I was given the chance to try the anaesthetic machine. The senior registrar handed me a rubber mask, with the words: "If you'd like to have a sniff, feel free".

I was not there as a patient, only as a visitor, and I took the mask from him and held it against my face. He twiddled a few knobs on the machine which gave a hiss as the gas came on. "That's put off the oxygen now. If you take a sniff ... you'll be smelling the rubber from the tubing, which is the major smell that people get nowadays.

I inhaled deeply with the mask pushed against my face. He turned another knob. "I'll just put it on 100% oxygen to







let you compare the two. There's really no difference in the smell or the taste, is there?"

The gas hissed into the mask, and I held it closer to my features. The cushioned edge was so comfortable against the face. I took another breath and had to agree that the gases had no smell whatsoever. "You wouldn't know if you were breathing in gas or oxygen", said the registrar.

He changed the mix to include nitrous oxide, and I pulled deeply on the mask again. I can tell you it was extremely pleasant, and apart from the slight rubbery smell from the mask, there were no after effects at all. I certainly wouldn't be afraid of having a general anaesthetic, especially one given by inhalation.

I am always fascinated when I watch patients being 'put under' in hospital programmes on television. I can almost smell the rubber from their masks as they breathe in the mixture.

So, it's with a satisfied feeling of well-being that I think back on the experiences I have had with oxygen masks, gasmasks and breathing equipment for anaesthesia. I suppose I find the memory of the mask on my face very sexually stimulating.

Even when I see the silver streaks left in the pale blue sky after a jet fighter has been up there on an exercise, I think about the mask worn by the pilot at such a high altitude. Oh to be there in the cockpit with him, breathing in the rubbery environment. Perhaps one day, who knows?

Above, model of a pilot wearing an early oxygen mask for pressure breathing at high altitude. Right, a selection of oxygen masks used in World War II, on display at Kirriemuir Air Museum in Scotland.

Meanwhile, I can enjoy close encounters with oxygen masks in museums, and there is a whole section in the Wellcome Foundation Exhibition at the Science Museum in South Kensington in London where they have every conceivable piece of anaesthetic equipment used through the ages. It's definitely worth seeing.

One of the displays with life-size figures shows a patient being given gas at the dentist. Stand in front of the glass, and be caught in a time warp. You can almost smell the rubbery pong from the face mask, and imagine the faint sweet smell of the nitrous oxide as it hisses in the corrugated tubing.

"Breathe deeply. That's it. Blow away the smell", says the soft voice behind you. The eyelids gently close. What a gas.

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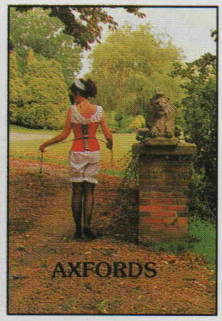

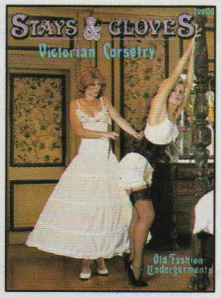

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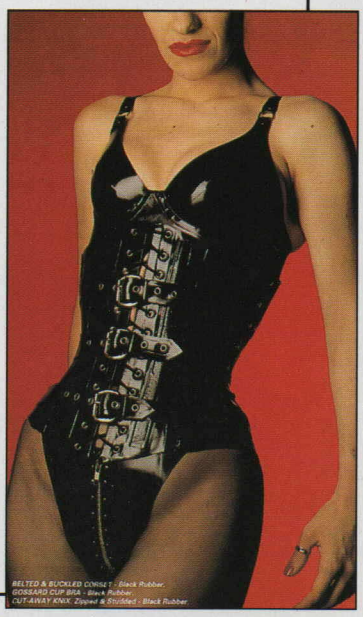

right: just one of the designs featured in the catalogue.

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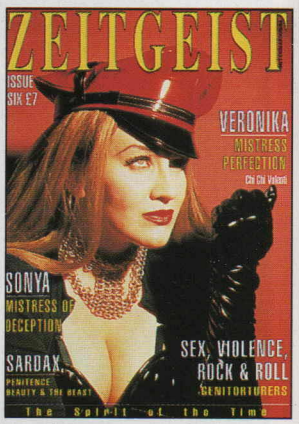

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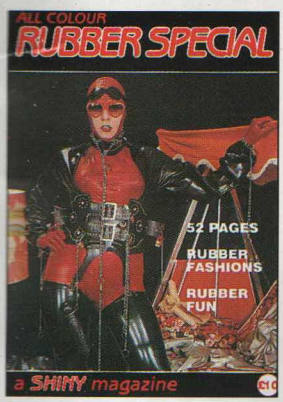

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